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An Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts

Vol. XXVII, No. 5

FEBRUARY, 1956

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YOUNG STARS OF THE SEASON

by PAUL KOZELKA

COSTUMES OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

CHARLES R. TRUMBO

SPECIFIC BUSINESS AND PICTURIZATION

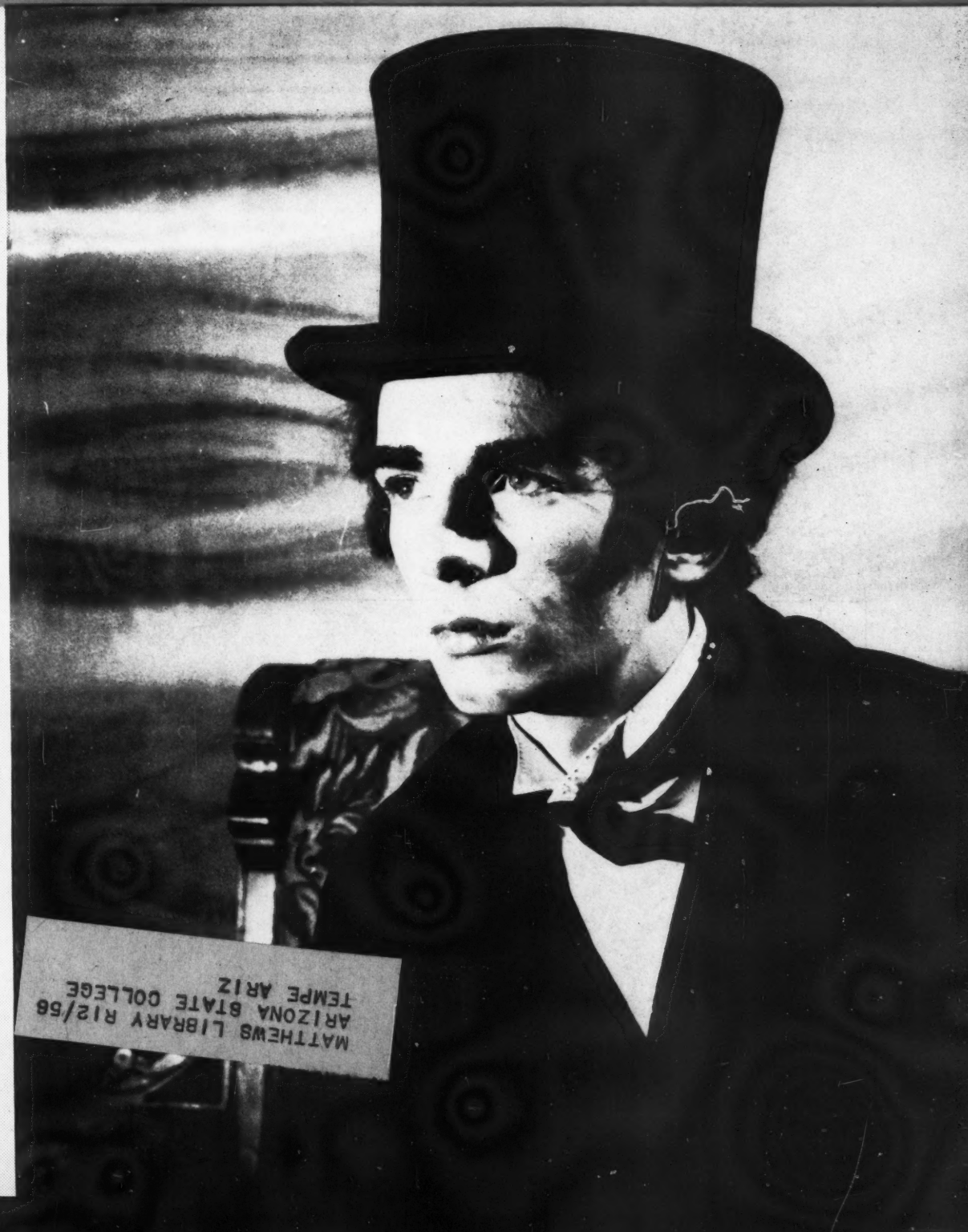
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In this Issue

WITH THE ladies of Eighteenth Century France with their wide, wide side hoops and their mountainous headdresses, with the men of all Europe with their gaudy coats and silk pants, and for the first time, with the men and women of the American Colonies do we visit this month in Mr. Trumbo's article, *Costumes of the Eighteenth Century*. One can readily understand the "why" of the French Revolution by studying the contrast of costumes between the rich and the poor. The not so many rich were very rich, and the so, so many poor were very, very poor—so their costumes tell us.

COME WE now to the authors, actors, and plays of our own era—plays frequently produced by our own member schools. Young as you Thespians may be, you are acquainted with George M. Cohan and his well known plays: *Give My Regards to Broadway*, *Forty-five Minutes from Broadway*, and the ever popular *Seven Keys to Baldpate*; with Anne Nichols' *Abie's Irish Rose*; with Sidney Howard's *The Late Christopher Bean*; with Moss Hart's and George S. Kaufman's *You Can't Take It with You*. Mr. Ballet has come to familiar scenes in this month's article, *The Theatre Today in the United States*—and this is only part one!

PAUL KOZELKA, Department of Speech and Dramatics, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, interviewed two outstanding personalities of today's theatre—Viveca Lindfors and Janis Paige. It's so nice to meet these two charming young actresses.

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Your editor hopes that in the not too distant future Mr. Kozelka again takes us backstage for additional introductions to other personalities of today's theatre.

SPECIFIC Business and Picturization is the specific title of Dr. Dusenbury's fifth article of the series, *The Elements of Directing*. Here he stresses what is commonly known in both the commercial and educational theatre that each play bears the director's "signature." Quoting from his article, Dr. Dusenbury states: "Through the elements of specific business and picturization, the play director may feel that he can personally 'sign' the play limited only by his own resourcefulness and creative imagination."

AS USUAL our department editors are with us again with their *Brief Views*, *Plays of the Month*, and *Theatre for Children*. Movies, TV and radio programs are reviewed and recommended. Our student Thespians continue with their delightful chattering. All yours for the reading!

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As I See It . . .

LET'S CALL IT "GUIDANCE"

IF there is any one word in disfavor in modern educational circles, especially in secondary schools, that word is *discipline*. Often the mere mention of disciplinary action to students arouses antagonism and emanates parental hostility and destructive criticism in some cases from the top brass. The trend today is the democratic way, the "do-it-yourself" way. Today's teachers are now "guidance" counselors, not disciplinarians. Personal failures are not the result of poor discipline, but poor guidance. Call such action what you may, I have yet to meet a successful teacher who was not also a tactful disciplinarian.

Maybe in my dotage I am not "up to good teaching practices," but in my overall observations I have yet to find a teacher who can successfully teach a class without control of that class, who can sponsor an activity without careful "guidance" and who can chaperon a dance or an out-of-town trip without firm disciplinary procedures. I have observed classes where the "do-it-yourself" students were doing everything else except the business at hand. I have seen activities disbanded by the administration because of the weakness of faculty supervision. And I know of several "out-of-town" trips which really brought upon schools adverse criticisms and in some cases financial losses for damages due to the lack of proper "guidance." Young people as individuals may not need discipline, but guidance; in groups, however, these same young people need tactful discipline, not guidance.

From my past experiences as a teacher over a period of 26 years I firmly believe that high school students welcome both guidance and discipline. I know, in spite of the increase of statistics of juvenile delinquents, that 90 per cent of the national high school student body are clean cut, moral, well-behaved young men and women. Too often youthful exuberance, care-free attitudes and frenzied actions, especially at athletic contests, are misinterpreted by adults who have long forgotten their own youth. These hysterias must, however, always be under control, and such control, certainly welcomed by students, is essential for good teaching. Furthermore, I have found that the "would-be popular" teacher, at whatever the cost, is the least respected and certainly not the long remembered. As high school students can quickly spot weaknesses, a superb teacher practices fairness, honesty, non-favoritism and understanding both in the class room and in his activity.

In the secondary school theatre discipline is a "must." No high school play can be successfully presented publicly unless all standard rules for play production are carefully observed from the play-reading committee, the try-outs, the rehearsals, to the final performance. To do otherwise would be catastrophic. Especially to groups travelling to play festivals, regional and national conferences, procedures of conduct must be first explained and then strictly enforced. It is up to us sponsors to learn the art of administering tactful disciplinary control at all times and under all circumstances.

If *guidance* is the popular word today, then use it. To me, however, it must still be tactful *discipline*—a discernment of the best course of action under given conditions and the ability to deal with others without giving offense. I'm all for democracy in government, in school and in the home—a democracy with discipline. Without laws, rules and ethical procedures there would be chaos.

ORCHIDS OF THE MONTH

TO Ted Skinner, who served so well on our Board of Experts at our 1954 National Conference, upon his appointment to Chairman

of the Department of Speech and Director of the Fine and Applied Arts Division, Lamar State College of Technology, Beaumont, Texas. Our best wishes for a long and successful tenure at this new post!

ATTENTION PLAYWRIGHTS!

THE University Theatre at the University of Illinois in association with the 1957 Festival of Contemporary Arts announces its fourth new play competition. The winning play will be produced by the University Theatre in March, 1957, at the biennial Festival of Contemporary Arts. All scripts must be submitted by June 1, 1956, to the New Play Committee, Room C, Lincoln Hall, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois.

TOO GOOD TO MISS!

OUR Thespian Troupes in southeastern Ohio should plan now to attend the one remaining production of Ohio University Theatre, Athens, for the 1955-56 season: Rathgan's *The Browning Version* and Fry's *A Phoenix Too Frequent*, May 15-19. Write to Director, O. U. Theatre, Athens, Ohio, for tickets.

THESPIANS FROM EVERYWHERE

JUST recently I received a letter from Thespian Sandy Reynolds (Troupe 617), who is enrolled in the Pasadena Playhouse College of Theatre Arts, about her exciting experiences as a beginning student. Her enthusiasm I pass on to you with the following quotation from her letter:

"I have found many new friends and National Thespian Society members there. I say new friends as there were only two of us accepted from the local area (Los Angeles). Everyone else comes from some other part of the world; we even have a full-fledged Middle-Eastern prince here at school.



*Mitchell Gertz, head of the Mitchell Gertz Agency, one of scores of Hollywood talent scouts, casting directors, actors' agents who regularly cover Playhouse productions, chats with Adriana Gutierrez, Mexican student actress.

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YOUNG STARS of the SEASON

PAUL KOZELKA
TEACHERS COLLEGE
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NEW YORK 27, N. Y.

DEAR HELEN:

NOW THAT you have finished the class play, have you decided on a career in the theatre? Are you going to college, to TV or the movies, or to a dramatic school? You will be successful wherever you go because you are pretty and common-sensible, but you have so much energy and ambition you may waste time before you find yourself. I'm writing to you like an uncle because that's what I am. In order to get some information for you about a career in the theatre I had interviews with Viveca Lindfors and Janis Paige, famous leading ladies of Broadway and Hollywood. They are just as beautiful and charming in their dressing-rooms as they are on stage. I asked them about their early training and how they would advise a young person today.

Viveca Lindfors attended a private school for girls in Stockholm and acted in one play. Dramatics was entirely extra-curricular, but in some courses students could read plays for credit. Miss Lindfors won a scholarship over 150 competitors at the Royal Dramatic Academy where she spent three years learning, as she said, "acting, dancing and patience." In her first year, along with other beginning students, she did absolutely no acting but instead watched performances by the professional company of the Royal Dramatics Theatre, read poetry, and studied theatre history, fencing, and dancing. This first year was a significant part of Miss Lindfors' training because it gave her a humble, modest and respectful attitude toward the theatre. In her second year she worked on classroom scenes and played extras occasionally on the big stage. During her third year Miss Lindfors played small parts with the permanent company and in the summer toured Sweden with a professional group. After graduating from the Academy, she acted the leading roles in many modern and classical plays and made about fifteen movies. She was recently voted the No. 1 box-office star of Europe. Miss Lindfors came to America in 1946 and has appeared in many movies including *Run for Cover*, *Moonfleet*, *Night unto Night*, *To the Victor*, *Adventures of Don Juan*, *No Sad Songs for Me*, *Four Men in a Jeep*, and *No Time for Flowers*. For the living theatre, she acted in *I've Got Sexpence*, *Bell*,

Book and Candle, *An Evening with Will Shakespeare*, and most recently, *Anastasia*.

When I asked Miss Lindfors what she thought about training for the theatre while in high school, she said a teenager should study history, sociology, psychology, child-training, dramatic literature and all the other subjects that prepare him to choose a profession wisely. Miss Lindfors recommends that a young actor start with the classics to learn form and discipline, "start with the hard thing," and then perform modern plays. She studied with several actors' groups in New York and acquired a Stanislavski approach to play analysis, to discovering true relationships and conflicts, and to adjusting her acting to the interpretations of other actors.

Miss Lindfors is frank to admit that if she had tried to study the Stanislavski method at 18, she would have been terribly confused but now, with her varied experiences and her clear purposes, she can adapt herself to whatever features of the system are most helpful.

Miss Lindfors had given me forty-five minutes of her time when she should have been resting between the matinee and evening performance, so I stood up to leave. Her final suggestion to young people planning a life in the theatre is probably her own motto: "Think, look, read; search for the truth and act truthfully."

Janis Paige talked with me before a matinee of *The Pajama Game* in which she created the role of Babe Williams and played it over 460 times. She left the smash musical to work on a new TV series for CBS, a half-hour situation



Janis Paige, popular Movie and TV star.

show which came into your living rooms last fall. Miss Paige has a miniature Schnauzer that wanted to stay in the dressing-room with me, but he lost the argument.

We talked about the actress' experiences at Stadium High School in Tacoma, Washington, where she sang the leads in *The Desert Song* and *The Merry Widow*. In those days she had a high soprano voice, but now it is a husky, provocative mezzo which Miss Paige developed for her night club and vaudeville appearances. The young actress began her theatre training in Hollywood where she "played an exaggerated, comic type for six years." Among her movies are the popular and entertaining *Hollywood Canteen*, *Of Human Bondage*, *Two Guys from Milwaukee*, *Her Kind of Man*, *The Time, the Place and the Girl*, *Love and Learn*, and *Fugitive Lady*.

Then one day, as Miss Paige describes it, she realized how limited was her experience as a professional entertainer. She loved people, and she was happy as an actress. She had all the qualities and talents that please an audience, yet she was tormented by self-doubt and wondered whether she belonged in the entertainment field. Immediately she embarked on a coast-to-coast tour of personal appearances during which she literally discovered herself. She learned how to command attention in a noisy night club, and how to project a song to the last row of a large vaudeville house. She learned the art of ad-libbing, adapting to unexpected reactions, and the different types of song styles. In short, she developed a stage personality that was original, refreshing, exciting, and honest. She achieved a feeling of inner security by earning a solid reputation as a top entertainer.

Miss Paige easily turned to the legitimate theatre and made a successful Broadway debut in *Remains To Be Seen*.

(Continued on page 30)



Viveca Lindfors in the title role of *Anastasia*, recent Broadway hit.



The Beggar on Horseback by Kaufman and Connelly; a later American experiment with expressionism in comedy.

DESPITE considerable negative criticism and snobbery on the part of the *avant garde* about the American theatre, it is nonetheless one of the most active theatres in the world. Ranging from the fantastically crowded theatre district called "Broadway" across the nation, where innumerable amateur and educational stages are functioning regularly, the drama is very much alive. Not only is the "legitimate theatre" a going and an ever-growing concern, but with its stepchildren (the cinema, radio, and television), it has evidenced amazing ingenuity and originality, as well as great technical skill. If the American theatre still is like an overgrown child who doesn't seem to know his own possibilities as a thinking or an aesthetic creature, it must be remembered that this theatre is in reality very young.

The renaissance in American drama began with William Vaughn Moody (1869-1910). Adolescence, let us say, begins with this poet who wrote *The Great Divide* (1906), a drama of importance and influence. Dealing as it does with the cleavage between the old East and the new West, as well as a non-sentimental approach to love, it represents what it is probably the first real psychological basis for the drama in this country. A similar poetic approach to the theatre was carried on by Josephine Preston Peabody (1874-1922) and Percy MacKaye (1875-), both colleagues of Moody. The other phase of Moody's work, realism, was early realized in the plays of Rachel Crothers (1878-), whose numerous "female" plays have proved popular with audiences as well as substantial in content. Similarly with Edward Sheldon (1886-), the force of Moody's realism was continued and carried a step forward. *Salvation Nell*

(1908), written for the famous actress Mrs. Fisk, is but one of the better known Sheldon dramas which deal with American problems at various levels. His realism, like all of the students of the form encouraged by Moody, is honest and clear.

But early twentieth century American theatre was not entirely serious. Langdon Mitchell (1862-1935), for example, achieved great popularity with his witty comedy, *The New York Idea* (1911), which effectively burlesqued the supposed sophistication of the big city by accepting divorce as a farcical basis for "changing partners" in rapid succession.



Early American expressionism is represented by Elmer Rice's tragedy, **The Adding Machine**.

HISTORY OF THEATRE

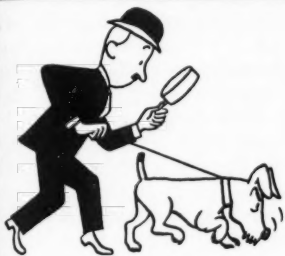
THEATRE TODAY in the UNITED STATES

(Part One)

by ARTHUR H. BALLET

Better remembered than Mitchell was George M. Cohan (1878-1944), the song-and-dance man who parlayed patriotism and a tune-writing knack into a multimillion dollar theatre success. A prodigious worker, his song-titles are still household bywords: *Over There*, *Mary*, *Give My Regards to Broadway*, and so on. His playwrighting was at best a series of situation gags like *Forty-Five Minutes from Broadway* (1906), *Broadway Jones* (1912), and *Seven Keys to Baldpate* (1913). Undoubtedly, Cohan was a better actor-showman than he was either songwriter or playwright. His great personal magnetism led to popularity that bordered on worship by his audiences. Possibly only one other American showman had such tremendous popular appeal: Al Jolson. Cohan as the sincere father in O'Neill's *Ah, Wilderness!* (1933) or his wonderful parody of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the Kaufman-Hart musical *I'd Rather Be Right* (1937) will always be remembered by those of us who saw him performing.

No history of the theatre will be sufficient unless two other American plays are noted. Winchell Smith (1871-1933) was a prolific playwright but in his



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PLAYS

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Lightnin' (1918) achieved phenomenal success: 1,291 Broadway performances. The other play is Anne Nichols' *Abie's Irish Rose* (1922), which was quite rightly condemned by the critics but kept open by an outpouring of publicity money until it was turned into one of the greatest box-office hits of all time. Both of these are very bad plays, with the latter the poorest. The public taste, in this instance at least, may well be questioned. Even more alarming is the success of Kirkland and Caldwell's *Tobacco Road* (1933), which after six years of continuous running on Broadway surpassed *Abie's Irish Rose*. The crude vulgarity and the spurious nature of the plot of these plays would seem to have ruled them out of production all together let alone permitted them to achieve phenomenal success. Not until *Life with Father*, the musical *Okla-homa!*, and the post-war comedy *Mister Roberts* did plays of some stature and at least a measure of decency replace the old war horses on the hit parade.

But this exploration of the popular successes of the American stage has led us a bit astray. The main line of serious drama continued with plays ranging from one-night "flops" to moderate drawing-appeal. Quite obviously, there have been a number of playwrights; this is self-evident from the relatively healthy state of the American theatre. Unfor-

tunately, not all of them contributed mightily to any advance in the art or the craft of the theatre. As in every age, they wrote plays for which producers hired actors, directors, designers, and theatres, and to which for a time audiences came. But as time passed, they have become merely pallid reminders of the past. Their literary value is too dubious for serious study, and their stage-worthiness is so fragile that if one were going to produce such a play, one could more easily find an up-to-date version to stage, albeit the title would be different (and probably of greater box office value).

Certain contributors, however, must be examined. Sidney Howard (1891-1939) is one such dramatist. *They Knew What They Wanted* (1924) is a sensitive, succinct drama peopled with persons of great magnetism. His later study of an overly-possessive mother in *The Silver Cord* (1926) is an equally important drama. With *The Late Christopher Bean* (1932) Howard achieved real popular acclaim, but at the expense of producing a play of synthetic sentimentality which is based on a curious set of coincidents. With *Yellow Jack* (1934) he again achieved significant stature in his dramatic expose of the great work done by scientists fighting yellow fever.

A minor playwright, but one who has written fairly sturdy material for the

stage, is George Kelly (1887-). Specializing in the satirization of human foibles, his delightful comedies are somewhat dated but still play well. *The Torchbearers* (1922) is a marvelous take-off on the amateur actors of the "little theatre craze" this country was going through in the Roaring Twenties. *The Show-Off* (1924) is a clever study of a foolish but lovable oaf.

Elmer Rice (1892-) gave, in the beginning of his career, great promise of becoming the best hope for a serious and intelligent American dramaturgy. *The Adding Machine* (1923) is one of the very few expressionistic dramas attempted in this country and is a sincere and imaginative statement of the American Everyman's plight in a complex economic society. In *Counsellor-at-Law* (1931) he turned to realism and the study of a New York lawyer, which provided Paul Muni with his finest stage role. Unfortunately, Rice seems to have lost his original spark, and his later plays have been somewhat of a disappointment. In a land where dramatists have been unaccountably fearful of experimentation and originality, Elmer Rice has at least sought to break through the old, established modes.

At this point it is essential to note a man who did not write plays but whose "47 Workshop" at Harvard was the in-

(Continued on page 30)

COSTUMES of the EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

by CHARLES R. TRUMBO

THE prevailing styles of France and England during the 18th century were reflected in the American colonies so that the styles of the old world were that of the new except in the more rustic American pioneer dress.

The French women were slow near the end of the century to give up their towering headdresses to adopt the more plain low hairdress of their English neighbors across the channel, but upon being ridiculed by their king they complied and changed the style to suit his taste.

In 1711 the hoop was invented by a mantuamaker by the name of Selby. Dresses which had formerly been looped back over contrasting petticoats were now hung out over hoops. They were rather flat in front and in the back. They projected out at each side over the hips to such an extent that ladies were often compelled to enter a door sideways.

A loose overdress known as the *sacque*, hung in wide plaits from the shoulders to the ground over a large hooped petticoat. It was open in front and worn over a petticoat and stomacher of the same material; however, a contrast of color and material was also popular. Later this was transformed into what was known as a "Watteay" with a few curved lines and worn over a laced stomacher and satin petticoat trimmed with flounces.



The richness of these costumes were described as "a black silk petticoat with a red and white calico border, a red and dove colored damask gown flowered with large trees, a yellow satin apron trimmed with white Persian muslin, and headcloths with crow-foot edging."

"An Isabella colored kincob gown flowered with green and gold; a dark colored cloth gown and petticoat with two silver orrices; a purple and gold atlas gown; a scarlet and gold atlas petticoat edged with silver; an under petticoat edged with gold; a black velvet petticoat; an allejah petticoat striped with green, gold and white; and clogs laced with silver."

"A green silk knit waistcoat with gold and silver flowers all over it, and fourteen yards of gold and silver thick lace on it; and a petticoat of rich strong flowered satin, red and white all in great flowers or leaves, and scarlet flowers with black specks brocaded in, raised high like velvet or shag."

Stays, or bodices, were considered a necessary article of woman's dress, and were a very stiff and straight-laced forerunner of the modern corset.

Patches were worn not only to enhance the beauty of the complexion, but were worn as political badges. The ladies with Whig sympathies wore these patches on the left-hand side of their faces; the Tories, on the right.

In 1719 women wore black and beaver hats, and the French "bonnet," the name given to caps and hoods throughout the century, was last seen in 1798 when straw bonnets became the fashion.

In 1720 women wore long and narrow muffs. When they crossed their hands, the muff was filled completely. Afterwards the muff became wider and in various forms was worn throughout the century. High-heeled shoes were also worn.

Cloaks for outdoor wear were used with some changes of form under the names of "pompadors," "Roquelaures," "cardinals," and "capuchins." The cardinal was a scarlet cloak with a hood, and the capuchin made its appearance in 1740.

Working women wore petticoats and half gowns, drawn with a cord around the waist, and coarse leather shoes. As a rule, servants wore the cast-off garments of their masters and mistresses.

The men of the period wore periwigs and cocked hats in the first half of the century. In 1706 an unusual cock of the hat came into fashion called the *Ramilie*, and a long plaited tail to the wig with a

great bow at the top and a small one at the bottom, known as the *Ramilie* wig, soon followed.

In the colonies, especially in Philadelphia, men were wearing cocked hats, wigs, coats with large cuffs, and big shirts that were lined and stiffened with buckram. The coat of a beau, or dandy, had three or four plaits in the skirt, wadded almost like a coverlet to keep them smooth, cuffs very large up to the elbows, the collars flat and low, so as readily to expose the close plaited neck-stock of fine linen cambric and the large silver stock-buckle on the back of the



neck. Shirts had hand ruffles, sleeves finely plaited. The breeches were close fitted, with silver, stone or paste buckles. The shoes or pumps with silver buckles of various sizes and patterns were worn with thread, worsted and silk stockings. Boys' clothing was generally similar to that of the men.

In England the ordinary costumes of gentlemen during the reigns of Queen Anne and George I were square cut coats and long flapped waistcoats with pockets in them that met the stockings drawn up over the knee high enough to conceal entirely the breeches, yet gartered below it. The men wore large hanging cuffs and lace ruffles. The skirt of the coat stiffened out with wire or buckram, blue or scarlet silk stockings with gold or silver clocks, lace neckcloths, square-toed, short quartered shoes, with high red heels and small buckles, very long and formally curled periwigs, black riding wigs, night cap wigs, small three cornered hats laced with gold or silver galloons (a kind of lace made of silk woven with cotton, gold, silver, or made of silk only) and sometimes trimmed with feathers composed the wardrobe of a gentleman from 1702 to 1724.

(Continued on page 28)

SPECIFIC BUSINESS and PICTURIZATION

by DELWIN B. DUSENBURY

ARTHUR HOPKINS, whose theatrical judgment gave the American theatre such noteworthy productions as John Barrymore in *Hamlet*, *Anna Christie*, and *The Petrified Forest* in his book *Reference Point*, based on a series of lectures on his theatre philosophy, said, "The director's work should always bear a recognizable signature." Always concerned with the importance of the imaginative and creative theatre, Hopkins emphasized the importance of the director's own personal integrity and interpretation in his "signature." Although each of the elements of directing previously discussed—play selection, casting, rehearsal procedure and general blocking—requires personal interpretation and integrity, the development of specific business and picturization are probably the most significant means by which the director personally signs his play.

This personalization of the play is often noted by critics of the professional theatre in their reviews of Broadway plays. In 1930 Ruth Gordon was asked by the Austrian director, Max Reinhardt,



Playboy of the Western World as produced by the Florida Players, University of Florida, Gainesville. Directed by Dr. Dusenbury.

professional productions of it did succeed in delighting audiences. Recently Tyrone Guthrie directed the same play with Miss Gordon in the leading role. The play, now re-titled, *The Matchmaker*, is one of the successful plays of the 1955-1956 Broadway season, and Brooks Atkinson, writing of the direction in the *NEW YORK TIMES*, notes that Mr. Guthrie "has enormous skill, recklessness and gusto and believes in cramming a theatre full of vitality." Guthrie's introduction of countless bits of stage business and his development of farcical stage pictures have given the play a definite sparkle and personality.

At the same time, while the director must stamp his identity on the play, it must be done in a completely unobtrusive fashion. "If the director's work is

well-balanced composition, but "his work is or should be unobtrusive." If this is true, how does the director personalize and *not* personalize his play? The director must be true to the playwright and at the same time offer his actors ample opportunity for their own creative efforts.

Probably the most obvious example of the personalizing of a play may be noted by citing the individual personalities or characteristics of directors. For example, the director who personally is a conscientious precisionist will interpret the play and direct the movement in a similar fashion. Likewise, the easy-going director may have a play that is marked by general action without too much emphasis on specific business, and the energetic director's play could be characterized by a maximum of stage movement with an emphasis on short stage crosses. Such generalization of the relationship between the director's personality and the movement in his play is dangerous because it is not always true. Observation of plays and directors in the non-professional theatre, however, indicates that there is some validity in this conclusion.

The director, however, may personalize the play in terms of general movement and at the same time allow the actor to develop his own specific business. One director, for example, in the course of a scene moved one of his actors from up left to down center; then down left to up center; and finally, over to right stage. Are you properly confused? Probably no more than the actor, especially, when the director said, "Now! Work out some specific business to justify the movement." Unmotivated movement must always be avoided in play. The actor studied the set carefully, and since it was a modern interior with a fireplace down left stage, a desk up center, and a bookcase over on the right stage, he developed specific business by planting a property newspaper on a table in the up left area. The use of the newspaper for-

(Continued on page 26)



A scene from the Florida Players' production of *The Inspector General* under the direction of Dr. Dusenbury.

to appear in Thornton Wilder's *The Merchant of Yonkers*. She declined because she did not believe that Reinhardt had the necessary understanding of the American idiom to interpret the play with integrity. She was right. *The Merchant of Yonkers* was not a successful play in New York although many non-

perfect, audiences will not be conscious of it," writes Mr. Hopkins and he concludes, "That is the proof of perfection." John Van Druten, playwright and director of many of his own successful productions, verifies this point when he says that "it is the director who can be praised" for attractive stage pictures and



THESPIAN SPONSORS AND MEMBERS EVALUATE SCRIPTS AND CT PROJECTS

FROM a random-sample questionnaire sent to Thespian sponsors who reported Children's Theatre as a part of their Thespian activity for the first time during the school year 1954-55, some very interesting and valuable reports have been received. The questionnaire concentrated upon two sets of values: Value of Script and Value of Project.

Simultaneously with the replies from Thespian troupes, there has arrived from the Chairman of the New Plays Committee of Children's Conference of AETA a set of criteria for evaluating plays (see block below). It is significant to observe how many of the values of the script cited as important by Thespian producers coincide with those recommended by this experienced committee.

In the following reports we shall hear from the sponsors and students of four Thespian troupes.

Producer: Troupe 224, Raymond High School, Raymond, Washington

Sponsor: Homer E. Morris

About the Script: *Aladdin and the Lamp* by Elizabeth Brown Dooley, French.

Mr. Morris says of this script, which plays about one hour, that it is valuable in that it presents familiar story-book characters with excellent pantomime and comedy possibilities,

especially in the part of the Camel. Furthermore, he cites the triumph of good over evil as a lasting lesson to the audience. Mr. Morris indicates that for Troupe 224, this script was "ideal" since it has the values already indicated, and a set easily developed with very little expense, and costumes easily made. He notes that their craft department made a very realistic camel for the production.

About the Project:

Mr. Morris says, "Thespian Troupe 224 presented *Aladdin and the Lamp* as their first Children's Theatre production last year. The reaction of the children and adults was so enthusiastic that we are already making plans to do *Jack and the Beanstalk* this year . . . Our production was unique in that we used a girl for Aladdin very successfully . . . As we had no budget for the production, we made all of our costumes, for many of which old velvet curtains served us admirably for material . . . The experience gained by the cast and production crew was of great value and will show results in future productions. The entire cast was made up of seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth grade students. As a result of the enthusiasm about this production, *Children's Theatre* is going to be an important part of our dramatic arts program."

Producer: Troupe 984, Central High School, Charlotte, North Carolina.

Sponsor: Jack Wernette

About the Script: *The Wizard of Oz* by Elizabeth Fuller Goodspeed, French.

According to Mr. Wernette, the script, which plays for about one hour, is good in that it familiarizes young audiences with an important children's classic. (He believes that if the script is not faithful to the original story, it can do more harm than good, in spoiling children's dreams of the imagined characters and situations.) Other values of the script are that it provides a number of interesting characters: Lion, Scarecrow, Tin Woodsman, Witches, Oz, Dorothy, and the dog Toto, which challenges all the energies of an agile actor . . . The director says that important pantomime is necessitated throughout the play; indeed, he says that almost all of the comedy of the play arises from skill in the use of pantomime. In spite of the virtues of this particular version, which Mr. Wernette recognizes, he regrets the fact that there is not a Charlotte Chorpenning version:



Bill Sitton as the "Scarecrow."
The Wizard of Oz, Troupe 984,
Central High School, Charlotte, No. Car.,
Jack Wernette, Sponsor.

he believes that the recognized "dean of playwrights for children" would have been able to handle many of the scenes more appealingly, especially those before the great Oz . . . And, he feels that the royalty on this play is too high (25 dollars a performance). Most children's plays carry a production fee about 15 dollars for each performance.

About the Project:

This play, produced under the auspices of the Charlotte Children's Theatre Association, and seen by about 800 children, was Troupe 984's first venture in this medium. According to the sponsor, it did not take the cast long to realize that all the old rules of acting applied most emphatically to this medium. They found that they had to work at careful enunciation, projection of voice, stressing of important plot ideas, waiting for laughs, and making the characterizations properly broad and convincing. They discovered that it took real work to get the young audiences to empathize with them, and received a great thrill when they achieved their goal of making the youngsters respond with laughter or applause at the appropriate moments . . . Mr. Wernette lists some of the challenging problems that had to be solved by the crew. There are three exteriors and two interiors, which had to be suggested by appropriate set pieces, and rapidly shifted; there are important lighting effects necessary to cover disappearing witches and an appearing and vanishing wizard; a green light for the Emerald City and a red light for the Ruby Palace. Then there are cyclone effects and suitable background music, and finally Dorothy ascending to heaven just before the final curtain. "Yes," says Mr. Wernette, "the production crew received quite a valuable work-out on this one."

Producer: Troupe 545, South Kitsap High School, Port Orchard, Washington.

Sponsor: Doris Adley

About the Script: *Prince Fairyfoot* by Geraldine Brain Siks, Children's Theatre Press.

Miss Adley says that this play has a well-developed plot with rather wide appeal to a number of age groups, and she found that the dialogue was suitable to both cast and audience. The director further says that this three-act script, which plays for about an hour, has a fast-moving story, with plenty of good exaggerated action. Especially good characters, she thinks, are the villainous, scheming Second Lord of the Land, and the Prince—the hero, who overcomes the forces of evil against him. She cites other values of the script, such as allow-

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING PLAYS

by New Plays Committee of The Children's Theatre Conference of AETA

1. Is the story suitable for children of the age level for which written?
2. Is the story worth telling? Does it have content and meaning?
3. Does the play develop along clear, dramatic lines? Does it have a beginning, a properly built climax, and conclusion? "Is the end contained in the beginning?"
4. Is the story told without interruption, or without the introduction of extraneous action or characters?
5. Does the story move? Does the audience see rather than hear the action? "Show it, don't tell it."
6. Is it clearly established to which character your story belongs?
7. Is there an opportunity for identification? Usually, a play is stronger if the child can identify with the character to whom it belongs.
8. Do the characters react to each other naturally?
9. Are the character and story developed through interaction?
10. Is the dialogue natural to the characters?
11. Does the play present technical difficulties that would be a deterrent to production under ordinary circumstances?
12. In the adaptation are the essential elements of the original retained so that the children will not be offended by the change?
13. Does the play fulfill its purpose? Does it have the author's "best" in preparation, construction, and writing?

* Charlotte B. Chorpenning: *Twenty-one Years with Children's Theatre*, Children's Theatre Press, Anchorage, Ky.

A SELECTED LIST OF RECOMMENDED PLAYS FOR CHILDREN

MODERN PLAYS

Crazy Cricket Farm
The Ghost of Mr. Penny
Little Lee Bobo
Mr. Popper's Penguins
Mystery at the Old Fort
The Panda and the Spy
Seven Little Rebels

HISTORICAL PLAYS

Arthur and the Magic Sword
Buffalo Bill
Daniel Boone
The Indian Captive
Marco Polo
The Prince and the Pauper
Young Hickory

FAIRY-TALE PLAYS

Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp
Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves
Alice in Wonderland
Cinderella
The Elves and the Shoemaker
Flibbertygibbet
Jack and the Beanstalk
King Midas and the Golden Touch
The Land of the Dragon
Little Red Riding Hood
Peter Peter, Pumpkin Eater
Pinocchio
The Plain Princess
Prince Fairyfoot
Puss in Boots
Rumpelstiltskin
Simple Simon
The Sleeping Beauty
Snow White and Rose Red
The Three Bears
The Wonderful Tang

CHRISTMAS PLAYS

The Christmas Nightingale
A Christmas Carol

PLAYS OF POPULAR STORIES

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Hansel and Gretel
Heidi
Hiawatha
Huckleberry Finn
Little Women
Oliver Twist
The Pied Piper of Hamelin
Rip Van Winkle
Robin Hood
Robinson Crusoe
The Sandalwood Box
Tom Sawyer
Treasure Island

The plays listed above will be found fully described and illustrated in our catalogue

THE CHILDREN'S THEATRE PRESS

CLOVERLOT

ANCHORAGE, KENTUCKY

ance for freedom of movement and the necessity for coping ingeniously with various staging problems; as, those connected with the big shoes.

About the Project:

In answer to the question, How do you feel about CT as a vehicle for the high-school producers? Miss Adley replies, "Very fine!" And she quotes from several of her Thespians: "Best audience ever." "Wonderful fun!" "I wish our high-school audiences were half so appreciative." From the vice-president of Troupe 545 Miss Adley sends the following account of their

first venture in Children's Theatre. Diann Purdy says:

"Giving *Prince Fairyfoot*, a children's play, was one of the most enjoyable and worthwhile projects that the members of Troupe 545 have ever undertaken. The setting of the play is in the village of Stumpinghame, where everyone has large feet. The more important the person, the bigger his feet must be . . . There was a lot of work involved in making the big feet and shoes, but this was part of the fun of the play. We made the shoes of bright cloth in interesting patterns, and each pair seemed to have a personality of its own. The rest of the

costumes and the sets were also very colorful; this was one reason that the children enjoyed the play so much.

"It was a very good feeling, acting in a play that was enjoyed so much by the audience. You could tell by the children's response that they were wrapped up in the story. They grew tense and worried as the villain Stiffstep went about his dirty work; they laughed heartily at the antics of the clumsy-footed villagers; and, they were visibly sympathetic with the plight of the Prince and his beautiful Princess Maybloom. . . . Just looking at the children's awe-struck faces during the curtain call was enough to pay for the work and time we spent on *Prince Fairyfoot*, our first children's play."

Producer: Troupe 1100, Green Lake High School, Green Lake, Wisconsin.

Sponsor: Mrs. Marjorie H. Learn

About the Script: *Sleeping Beauty of Loreland* by Frances Homer, Dramatic Publishing Co.

Mrs. Learn enthusiastically recommends this script, which plays for about one and a half hours, as a fine visual dramatization of a well-known story, especially appealing to both children and adults. She cites the Queen, Prince, Princess, Nanny, King Tuffy as especially appealing characters, and the scene where the court falls asleep and awakens as a particularly fine pantomimic scene.

About the Project:

Mrs. Learn says that now that their troupe has made its debut in Children's Theatre, her problem is "how to keep the lid on, and not do it to death." She quotes her Thespians as saying, "Most fun we ever had!" "When can we do another CT performance?" In answer to the questionnaire query: Do you expect to continue the project? Mrs. Learn replies, "Definitely Yes!" . . . For details of their first venture in this medium, Arthur Egbert, secretary of Troupe 1100, writes glowingly:

(Continued on page 25)



The Sleeping Beauty of Loreland, Troupe 1100, Green Lake, Wis., High School,
Mrs. R. L. Learn, Sponsor.

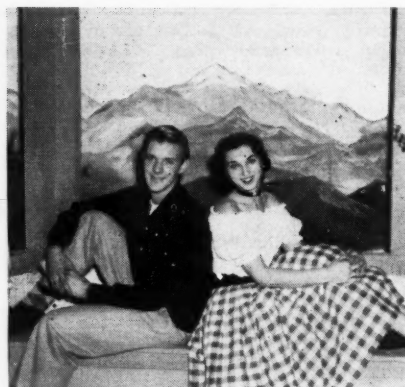
THE GOLDEN RIVER

Bainbridge High School, Winslow, Wash.

THERE IS no play like *The Golden River* we say. No play in the world can top its exciting plot, roaring comedy, or listenable music. We say again that *The Golden River* is a different play that is refreshing to produce.

The cast didn't quite go down on the farm for the setting, just to a slightly run down dude ranch. The play called for one scene, a living room. But what a living room! Mrs. Walsh found this room a lovely place to hang her wash. Bear chases were very common in this room as well as a toe-tapping square dance. The picture window in the center-back portion of the stage created a well balanced scene as well as a gathering place for all who came on stage.

Did this play have characters! Why *The Golden River* proved it could beat any circus! We had a bear that provided a laugh every growl it made. Although this furry beast was only a rejected suitor in disguise, he caused much excitement throughout the three acts. Another character, who proved to be a real character, was a certain movie actress who came for a rest at the ranch. Between the movie star and the very country like family who owned the ranch, there was a hot time in the old dude ranch. Also a three-way romance sent fireworks, as well as a little tenderness, into the play. And while all this was going on there were several middle-aged visitors at the ranch who added more interest plus lots of laughs.



Golden River, Troupe 416, Bainbridge High School, Winslow, Wash., Mrs. Le Roy Wilson, Sponsor.

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS

Central High School, Duluth, Minn.

HERE IS a play, sensitively written, which touches upon the realities of life in a poetic and understanding manner. The plot revolves around a poet and his young son who symbolize the spiritually rich and the materially poor of the world. There is an old man who comes into their homes, enriching their lives and the lives of the community with dreams of past generations. The sweet music he plays on his bugle draws all who are able to hear. He bears the burdens of the world and finds peace and rest only in death, while the poet whose dreams have not materialized leaves with his son in search of new horizons.



My Heart's in the Highlands, Troupe 506, Central High School, Duluth, Minn., Dale M. Baum, Sponsor.

To add to all the goings-on there were many songs sung by five of the main characters. A good old wash day song at the beginning put the audience in the right mood. The songs of the young lovers make any audience want to hear more. And the theme, "The Golden River," is sung in several places in the play. All in all the songs add to a 100% perfect play making it 200% pure enjoyment.

MRS. LEROY WILSON
Sponsor, Troupe 416

The roles of Ben Alexander, the poet, and Jasper MacGregor, the man with the heart in the highlands, require mature actors who are able to understand and portray sensitive and variable characters. Mr. MacGregor must develop an accent characteristic of the Scotch while another character, Mr. Kosak, the grocer, must speak with a Slovakian accent. The poet's son, Johnny, was played by a sophomore under five feet tall. *My Heart's in the Highlands* is obviously a

PLAYS OF THE MONTH

Edited By EARL BLANK

man's play, calling for eleven men and two women and a number of non-speaking neighbors and friends.

An effective set is relatively simple to construct using 4' x 8' sheets of upson board. The stylized tree, house, ramp, and store unit were faced with this inexpensive and versatile material. 1" x 3" boards were used to brace the tree. The house was placed on three folding parallels. The setting was lighted with six 500 watt Century ellipsoidal Lekolites in the auditorium and twelve 500 watt Century Fresnelites on the first pipe. Flexible area lighting is tremendously helpful in establishing the setting, mood, and atmosphere of the play. We have purchased our own lighting equipment with the receipts from our plays, and consider it fortunate that our principal looks upon high school dramatics as an educational experience and not a fund raising proposition for other activities.

My Heart's in the Highlands is a play that perhaps should be done more often by secondary schools, as it gives excellent training for young actors and offers an audience an unusual and even provocative evening of theatre.

DALE M. BAUM
Sponsor, Troupe 506

OUR MISS BROOKS

Owatonna, Minn., High School

I HESITATED about presenting *Our Miss Brooks* for two reasons. First, I wondered whether or not the audience would expect to see a direct imitation of the radio and television personalities. If so, the play might be dull by comparison. Secondly, would the ridicule of school teachers and school problems go too far?

After reading the play, I decided to chance it; all my fears were groundless. The plot is delightful because it presents the very problems that any high school dramatics director must face in an overcrowded school. Miss Brooks could be you or I, and the character is real and lovable. Eve Arden gives one interpretation; our girl gave an equally delightful one.

The production is simple—just a classroom setting. However, we felt that to make the set interesting, vivid colors should be used. You might think ours was startling, but the audience enjoyed it very much. We used three shades of blue for the walls, and painted the doors, woodwork, and molding around the blackboard a pale yellow. This, plus

DRAMATICS

**GHOST WANTED
GOLDEN RIVER
OUR MISS BROOKS
MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS**

bright costumes, gave the play a gay, modern mood.

The third act concerns the preparation for *Lost Horizon*, the school play. It is important to costume these students in an interesting manner to add color to the play. We had some short dresses from the 1920's in our wardrobe department, and we used these for Jane, Elaine, and Faith. For Doris we used oriental pajamas and heavy make-up; for the lady missionary we chose a man-tailored suit and a felt hat.

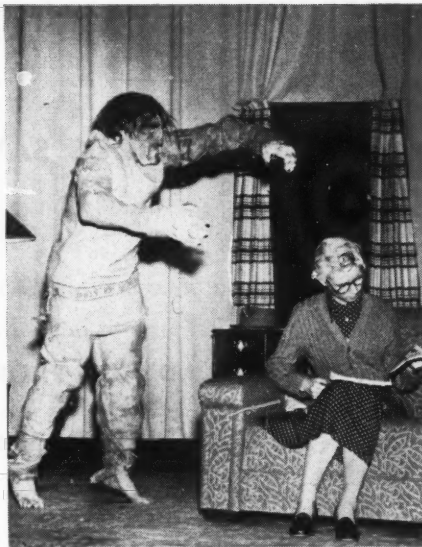
The publicity for *Our Miss Brooks* went over in a big way of course because the story is so well known and enjoyed. Last, but most important, it is just the type of play that all the students from the grades through high school like best. Youth, romance, and hilarious situations abound.

HELEN STEPPE
Sponsor, Troupe 971

GHOST WANTED

Tonasket, Washington, High School

WHEN OUR Thespian Troupe read *Ghost Wanted*, we realized that it was the play for us. The characters



Ghost Wanted, Troupe 910, Tonasket, Wash., High School, Yvetta Snowden, Sponsor.

cast thus felt very good, as others on the coveted list are: *Little Women*, *Nine Girls*, and *Room for One More*.

The basic staging of *Ghost Wanted* presents the first problem. The necessity of a sliding panel is quite a teaser when you're working with a cyclorama. Our stage crew finally built a bookcase on ball-bearings that could easily be operated from backstage by one person. Stairs and a landing prove easier than it

PUBLISHERS
Our Miss Brooks, Dramatic Publishing Co., Chicago, Ill.
My Heart's in the Highlands, Samuel French, Inc., N. Y. C.
Ghost Wanted, Golden River, Row, Peterson & Co., Evanston, Ill.

made them almost absolutely colorless, with a moustache and beard for the professor and sunken eyes for Madam Zolga. We used a green spot on them during their scenes on the landing, entrances, and exists. All in all, it gave a very ghostly effect.

Troddy is a very good part, as is Azalea. The "zombie" presented a make-up problem, but we used a rubber mask and hands, and a wig. We dressed him in a loose outfit made of gunny sacks. We found that by keeping the name of our "zombie" a secret, we built up a lot of suspense before the actual presentation.

The plot revolves around the disappearance of Simon Gore and later, the sheriff Bradshaw. An F. B. I. man and a foreign agent enter the picture and you are up against a spine-tingling who-done-it???

What was even better was the audience reaction. People were talking about it for months. Our director had complaints from several people who missed the first performance so we decided to present it a second time, this time free of charge. Needless to say, we had a full house.

YVETTA SNOWDEN
Sponsor, Troupe 910



Our Miss Brooks, Troupe 971, Owatonna, Minn., High School, Helen Steppe, Sponsor.

were excellent, the staging comparatively easy, and the plot marvelous.

After we had presented the play, we found out just how right we were. *Ghost Wanted* was put on the list of favorites by many, many people who hadn't missed a high school play in years. The

sounds; the remainder of the staging is simple.

There are two excellent character parts in the play. Madam Zolga and Professor De Vallan are both really characters and have wonderful possibilities. In making up these two people, we

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MY SISTER EILEEN

The comedy hit by Joseph Fields and Jerome Chodorov (based on stories by Ruth McKenney) is once again widely available for production. There are still some restrictions, but inquiries are invited.

The playbook contains minor revisions and cuts which make the play entirely acceptable to any audience.

21 men
(several are minor bits,
and 6 have no lines)

6 women



1 interior

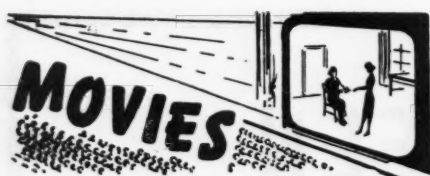
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As told by the N. Y. World-Telegram, MY SISTER EILEEN "recounts only the twelve months' period encompassed by the signing of a lease on a Greenwich Village apartment and the evacuation thereof, and a few of the amazing adventures that befell the two girls . . . an engaging, heart-warming play with exceptionally high comedy content. Eileen is the pretty one—the one who has stage aspirations and the homey personality that innocently invites passes from every man from 14 to 85 who has eyes in his head. Ruth is the plainer one, and her bent is for literature. Well, the two

girls . . . land in the toils of Landlord Apopulous and the most distracting apartment you ever saw. Through their basement grating the swirling life of the Village . . . seep, flow and sometimes come in an unwelcome deluge . . . The kitchenette is aptly described as 'a nauseating nook.' Blasting in the new subway cavern beneath rocks the building . . . Finally six officers of the Brazilian navy follow Ruth home, under certain mistaken impressions, and create something . . . only short of an international incident."

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JAZZ FANS, take note! *The Benny Goodman Story* is here! After a long (and patient?) wait, Steve Allen of TV's *Tonight* finally makes his appearance this month in the title role of this tune-packed film story of Benny Goodman, his likes, struggles and efforts to create a favorable recognition of the then very new "jazz." With a headline cast under the direction of Valentine Davies, this Universal-International release should appeal not only to you high schoolers, but to your parents as well. Why not treat Mom and Dad to the movies some night this month? You'll all have fun!

Harry James, Gene Krupa and Lionel Hampton, to name just three of them, all appear to add their parts in the life of Benny Goodman. Donna Reed takes the part of BG's heart interest... Sammy Davis, Sr. makes an appearance too! All in all, this screen story has been well worth waiting for and is well worth seeing!

Picnic, another long-awaited movie, is scheduled to be released this month and if it lives up to half of its rave notices,

could be more easily termed a spectacular!

Rosalind Russell turns in her best performance as a frustrated spinster who really loves men. You will love Ros and her antics (even though the local men don't) as she desperately tries to get some unsuspecting male interested in her. She does succeed too after imbibing too much at the annual picnic and pleading with a local store-keeper to marry her. Her scene and pleas of "Please Marry Me" are worth the price of admission alone.

The action all takes place in a small Kansas town to which William Holden "rides the rails" to see an old school chum (Cliff Robertson), who happens to be engaged to "the prettiest girl in town" (Kim Novak), who in time falls in love with our friend, Bill Holden. Complicated? Just wait a while! Kim's mother (Betty Field), her sister (Susan Strasberg), and a philosophic neighbor (Verna Felton) don't help the situation any at all! At the annual picnic, where everyone seems to have had too much to drink, Bill Holden drives away with Kim in Cliff's car. The local police take over the next day by telling Holden to get out of town and stay out. So he leaves... Kim finally persuades her mother that she does really love him and she follows him.

Now, will all "raised eye-brows" please relax? This movie is, granted,

maybe a little "wild" for some teeners, but I think the majority of people will agree with me after they have seen it, that although it's very realistic, it isn't in poor taste. Just good fun!

See You at the Movies?

COMING YOUR WAY

GABY, drama, Leslie Caron, John Kerr. (MGM)

THE COURT JESTER, comedy, Danny Kaye, Glynis Johns, Basil Rathbone. (Paramount)

MOHAWK, western, Scott Brady, Rita Gam, Neville Brand. (20th Century-Fox)

ON THE THRESHOLD OF SPACE, science fiction, Guy Madison, John Hodiak, Virginia Leith. (20th Century-Fox)

MEET ME IN LAS VEGAS, musical, Dan Dailey, Cyd Charisse, Paul Henreid. (MGM)

THE LAST HUNT, adventure-drama, Robert Taylor, Stewart Granger, Debra Paget. (MGM)

BROADWAY LINE-UP

ALVIN THEATRE—*No Time for Sergeants*, Andy Griffith. Comedy.

ANTA THEATRE—*The Great Sebastians*, Alfred Lunt, Lynn Fontanne. Comedy.

BARRYMORE THEATRE—*The Chalk Garden*, Gladys Cooper. Comedy.

BELASCO THEATRE—*Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?*, Henry Morgan, Orson Bean, Jane Mansfield, Walter Matthau. Comedy.

BOOTH THEATRE—*Top Man*, Polly Bergen, Ralph Meeker. Drama.

BROADHURST THEATRE—*The Desk Set*, Shirley Booth. Comedy.

CORONET THEATRE—*A View from the Bridge*, Gloria Marlowe, J. Carroll Naish, Van Heflin. Drama.

CORT THEATRE—*Diary of Anne Frank*, Susan Strasberg, Joseph Schildkraut, Gusti Huber. Drama.

46TH STREET THEATRE—*Damn Yankees*, Stephen Douglass, Gwen Verdon. Musical.

HELEN HAYES THEATRE—*Tiger at the Gates*, Michael Redgrave. Drama.

HELLINGER THEATRE—*Plain and Fancy*, Evelyn Page. Musical Comedy.

HENRY MILLER THEATRE—*Witness for the Prosecution*, Una O'Connor, Patricia Jessel, Francis L. Sullivan. Mystery.

HOLIDAY THEATRE—*The Righteous Are Bold*. Drama.

IMPERIAL THEATRE—*Silk Stockings*, Hildgarde Neff, Don Ameche. Musical.

LONGACRE THEATRE—*The Lark*, Julie Harris. Drama.

LYCEUM THEATRE—*A Hatful of Rain*, Shelley Winters. Drama.

MAJESTIC THEATRE—*Fanny*, Walter Slezak, Ezio Pinza. Musical.

MARTIN BECK THEATRE—*The Teahouse of the August Moon*, John Beal, Eli Wallach. Comedy.

MOROSCO THEATRE—*Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Burl Ives, Barbara Bel Geddes, Mildred Dunnock. Drama.

MUSIC BOX THEATRE—*Bus Stop*, Kim Stanley, Anthony Ross, Elaine Stritch, Dick York. Drama.

NATIONAL THEATRE—*Inherit the Wind*, Paul Muni, Ed Begley. Drama.

PLYMOUTH THEATRE—*Janus*, Margaret Sullavan. Comedy.

ROYALE THEATRE—*The Matchmaker*, Ruth Gordon. Comedy.

ST. JAMES THEATRE—*The Pajama Game*, Pat Marshall, John Raitt, Helen Gallagher, Eddie Foy, Jr. Musical.

SHUBERT THEATRE—*Pipe Dream*, Helen Traubel. Musical.

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Skipper's Scuttlebutt

FEBRUARY FANCIES

NOW THAT the rush and wonder of the holidays are over, and we are once more settled down to our regular hectic routines, let's take a glance at the past, a peep at the present, and a glimpse into the future of Television.

YESTERDAY'S PROGRAMS

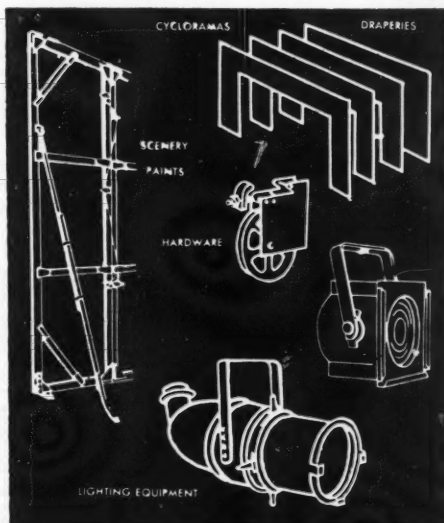
The *Lawrence Welk Show* (ABC-TV) turned out to be just about the "sleepers of the year" with its pleasantly paced hour of musical offerings. Mr. Welk's Champagne Orchestra evidently touched the "hum strings" of our great population, for the show moved along to a good score in the Nielsen ratings. Enjoyable as it was, the program was given added stimulus by the inclusion of the National Safety Council's safe-driving quiz — the winner being awarded a new Dodge for life. Skipper suspects that this segment of the *Lawrence Welk Show* has had much more to do with making its nationwide audience "safety conscious" than any other program of the past.

The December 17 presentation of *I Hear America Singing* was one of the most delightful spectaculars CBS-TV and the Ford Motor Company have offered to date. Eddie Fisher once more demonstrated his superb talent as the MC — as well as the great singer he is — and Eddie's "Sweet and Lovely" wife, Debbie Reynolds, was an added delight. As each has become a star singly, they are just as capable of becoming one of the country's top husband and wife teams. Nat (King) Cole and Ella Fitzgerald offered their individual song styles as only they can do; and Red Skelton came through with flying colors in several skits portraying Christmas scenes at different times and places. I cannot end this review without an "honorable mention" for young Ed Begley, who danced and sang throughout the show, seemingly with the characteristics and talent of Fred Astaire, Donald O'Connor, Dan Dailey, Gene Kelly, and who in Skipper's opinion was tops.

One of the best weekly variety shows to come along is the *Perry Como Show* (NBC-TV). Perry ranks high on Skipper's list of favorites (I bet he's on yours too), and any time is the right time to listen to the old favorites he usually sings on one portion of his show, as well as the newer songs. Even the leads into the inevitable sponsor's message are clever. Entertainment, such as offered by Perry and guests, often causes Skipper to forget to change channels to see if Ed Norton and Alice Kramden have been able to rescue Ralph from his current dilemma.



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1955 seemed to be the year for more and more spectaculars, some good, some not so good, and a few not worth the money and time put into them. The program directors and producers, however, are learning, and Skipper is looking forward to the day when all programs will be worth tuning in, knowing that fine entertainment is on the schedule. I only wish that this battle for the most viewers would end and we could see one top show without missing another, but as the means always justifies the end, the "battle" constantly is becoming a battle for better programming.

TODAY'S PROGRAMS

Ernie Kovacs, who romped through a few weeks of *Tonight* while Steve Allen was vacationing, has been given his own show, by NBC-TV. His show is seen at such a time in the morning, however, that his nationwide audience is limited to housewives who heretofore have been watching (or listening from another room) and loving Arthur, to pre-school children and a few who may be home from work or school for the day with a cold. This is not the audience which requested Ernie's show — and besides, how many women want such a zany start in the day? Mid-morning is usually the busiest time of day for household chores, which cannot be done in each room of the house when you have to watch what's going on. Skipper never dares to turn on the TV on Saturdays! Surely wish Ernie were on when I could see his show . . .

The present also continues to bring us up to the minute news and weather reports, the all important boxing matches and basketball games, regular local programs, *Matinee Theatre* (which is a good hour's entertainment), the regular weekly evening programs, and, by all means, the "soap operas." So, as a friend always tells Skipper, if you you don't like the show, change channels since you have a choice — and isn't it delightful at times to know the choice is ours?

TOMORROW'S PROGRAMS

NBC-TV hopes to double *Matinee Theatre's* time beginning either this month or next, which means the daytime spectacular (color and black and white too!) may soon become the star of the daytime programs. The producers thus far have kept it high grade entertainment: with two hours the quality should double too. This show, aimed also for housewives (and perhaps now some men of the house who work the early shift) has one of the best time spots for success — the chores are finished, lunch is over, the little ones are napping, and Mom needn't start dinner until it is over.

Skipper has a problem: what will they call the shows if they make them any bigger? A few ideas perhaps — two hours, super-spectacular; one and a half hours, the one and only spectacular; one hour, semi-spectacular; one-half hour, tri-spec; fifteen minutes, spec; less than fifteen minutes, a commercial — didn't you suspect?



Dick Gregory and Kay Beebe in a scene from **Ten Little Indians**, Troupe 1255, Hampton, Iowa, High School, Margaret Bates, Sponsor.

UPPER DARBY, PA. Troupe 1000

Troupe 1000 is always a busy one. Among our many activities the productions for children seem to be the favorites. This year our annual children's play was *Simple Simon*. We played to a total of 2400 delighted, excited children who lost themselves in the fairyland of trees that grow and sing, and dresses and nightshirts and red flannels that dance and talk. We were very thrilled to have Aurand Harris, the author, come from New York to see our production.

We topped off our year with *Sleeping Beauty*, a dance pantomime. It was choreographed and staged and costumed entirely by students. We used Linnebach projections instead of scenery to create the light, magical mood desired. The music and the dancing of Beauty, the Prince, the Good Fairy, the Wicked Fairy, and the King and Queen delighted our little audiences. But their favorites were the animals: a rabbit, a bird, a squirrel, and a sprightly skunk. Our pay for our long hours of hard work was the open-mouthed awe and gleeful laughing of the children.—Martha Noel, President.

KIRKLAND, WASHINGTON Troupe 274 BELLHOPS' HOLIDAY

Sir, we've been your bellhops lo these many years;
We've obeyed your orders, but you've caused us tears;
Though we've had security answering your call,
We'd discuss futurity for us one and all.
Bells by the million—morning, noon, and night—
We've become reBELLious—listen to our plight.
Bells may have beauty, at least so we've heard;
Us they call to duty, what an ugly word.
All these folks have come here just to see a show;
We would like to see it too—how about it, Jo?

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Now, just what seems to be wrong, fellows?

BELLHOP: It's these darned bells, bells, bells!

BELLHOP 1: We're vexed at humanity!

BELLHOP 2: It all seems inanity!

BELLHOP 3: We don't seek promotion!

BELLHOP 4: Just less commotion!

BELLHOP 5: We've tired of your bellow!

BELLHOP 6: Why not be more mellow?

Thespian Chatter

M. C.: I've come here to mellow my bellow, young fellows. In fact this very day we've declared a bellhops' holiday. We've collected an astounding array of bells just to entertain you, and I've called you here to ask you to be our guests. Now if you'll be seated, gentlemen, we'll show you and these good people, bells, bells, and more bells that have been brought here just for your enjoyment, so now we invite you to relax, while I summon our first bell. Tinker Bell! Tinker Bell! Bring on your bells. . .

And with these words began the Blackouts of '55.

Black light was used to give the effect of a magic garden in which could be found 19 types of bells. This eliminated the change of scenery and still gave the illusion of scenic variety.

Green, rose, blue, and orchid flood lights were used from backstage on a white nylon curtain to provide moods for the acts. The flats were painted a subdued green forest scene which harmonized with all of the acts.

Silhouettes were used to accent the background of "The Bells of St. Mary," "Wedding Bells," and "Carol of the Bells." In addition to these acts were "Tinker Bell," "Jungle Bells," "Alarm Clock Bells," "Alley Bells," "Belles of New York," "You Were Meant for Me," "Bell-Yakin," "School Bells," "Dumb Bells," "Liberty Belles," "While the Angelus Was Ringing," "Bellhop's Mess," "Cow Belles," "Hell's Bells," "Telephone Bells," "Fire Bell Five + Two," and "Christmas Bells."

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The show concluded by the return of the bellhops who enthusiastically congratulated and thanked the master of ceremonies for their holiday. Approximately 225 students worked on and took part in the production.—Reporter.

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, MASS. Troupe 1274

Take a mystery, a comedy, add a classic and a fantasy, mix well and top with one Broadway hit and you have a perfect season. This year Troupe 1274 strove to present a repertoire of plays to satisfy even the most exacting audience. In the fall our senior play, *Nine Girls*, was considered one of our finest productions. It was followed early in February by a trio of one-acts, including *The Maker of Dreams*, a portion of which was presented at Emerson College, *The Amazing Arabella*, and *Pater Noster*, which was also our entry in The Massachusetts Drama Festival. Finally, in April we presented our major production, *Mrs. McThing*. At our May nineteenth banquet, six new members were inducted.

Although our two remaining charter members are in the graduating class, our troupe is now firmly established and the coming year promises to be a rich and fruitful one for the Thespian of Troupe 1274.—Sarah Keller, President.

AMHERST, OHIO

Troupe 730

At the end of the year we like to look back over the trophies we have collected. Our first exploration into the trunk of memory brings up a strange looking bird, and "umbellus umbellus," survival from our first play of the year, *The Little Dog Laughed*. Our next dig brings up an oboe reed! This was left from our one-act, *The Christmas Oboe*. Other sundry and useless items include Little Boop's shepherd's crook carried in *Babes in Toyland*, a tea bag from the Keith Godfrey Talent Show, and a high button shoe worn by the fair Lily in *Way Down East*. Last of all, we gaze upon the trunk itself, nostalgic reminder of the final event of the year, our Senior Class Night Program, *Among Our Souvenirs*, written and partly directed by two versatile Thespian. An eventful year, 1954-55!—Carolyn Nabors, Secretary.

CONTINENTAL, OHIO

Troupe 1359

Troupe 1359 had a most enjoyable year. We opened our drama season with the junior class play, *The Able Miss Cain*, which received much praise from a most appreciative audience.

In January The Maurice Players, the Continental-Palmer High School Drama Club, presented an assembly program to the high school. This program was a take-off on the Ed Sullivan Television Show, *The Toast of the Town*. Many of the members of our troupe took part in this program. The program was so successful that we were invited to present it to the public as a part of the Polio Fund project in Continental. Our director, Roy Williamson, portrayed the master of ceremonies, Ed Sullivan.

Our featured production of the year was our production of *Stage Door*, which was presented early in March. This play was cast from students of all four high school grades. Each year the audience, who views the drama club production, is asked to vote for the actor and actress of the year and for the supporting actor and actress. This year the awards went to Robert Spitnale, Harlene Hicks, Jon Rockhold, and Joan Pitson respectively. All four gave excellent performances which will not be forgotten for a long time in Continental.

In April we presented our last major work of the year, *You Can't Take It with You*. This play was presented by the senior class as their class play and several of our graduating troupe



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members participated in this production. The play was well received by a very large audience. In our annual awards assembly, Jon Rockhold was announced as the winner of the Thespians of the Year Award. This was the second award for excellence in dramatics in the same year for Jon. Late in May we held our initiation of new members for Troupe 1359. We had eighteen people eligible for membership this year which brought our total to twenty-eight members.—Ann Kruse, Secretary.

CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA Troupe 200

The 1954-55 dramatic season was an unusually productive and outstanding one for Troupe 200. First on the program came the sophomore contribution, *Paul Splits the Atom*, which was later followed by *Who Gets the Car Tonight?* The juniors added their bit by producing *Family Circle* and also took part in the Band Minstrel and Follies. In the field of radio and TV we took part in the Junior Town Meeting of the Air and several of the members originated the TV program, *Beamed for Teens*. We also participated in the *I Speak for Democracy* and American Legion speech contests. Eastertime prompted an original choral drama, *Lo I Am with You Always*, and the combination of speaking and singing choruses produced an unusual and inspiring program. Next on the agenda was the one-act play festival. Highlight of our entire year was the accomplishment of what many deemed impossible. As our senior play we chose Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, which much to everyone's gratification was a great success.—Betty Rae Sims, Secretary.

YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN Troupe 789

Troupe 789 proved to be very active this year. A number of the members entered the district and regional forensic contests. As a

group our troupe put on two three-act plays and two one-act plays. The first of the full-length plays was entitled *The Little Dog Laughed*. The second, the senior play, was *Sabrina Fair. Parted on Her Wedding Morn and Itchin' to Get Hitched* were the one-act plays. We also took pride in having a couple of our members performing for the Ypsilanti Civic Players. Judy Mudge had the lead in *Time Out for Ginger* and Marcia Damoose starred in the part of the Madonna in *Holy Night*. We all feel that much was achieved in the organization this year.—Ann Kisor, Secretary.

ELKHART, INDIANA

Troupe 653

As we look back over the current year, Troupe 653 had many highlights in programs and varied goals which were achieved. *One Strange Night*, our Yule season presentation, was given three times in our city and several times in the surrounding communities. Also, most of our members busied themselves learning readings to deliver at school activities.

Our biggest project of the year was the annual all school play, *Ten Little Indians*, under the direction of our sponsor, G. Christine Dillen. Much hard work by all members made it a huge success. On March 26 eleven mem-



Taming of the Shrew, Troupe 662, Central High School, Ft. Wayne, Ind., Helen Lee, Sponsor.



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bers braved the blizzard weather to attend the state Regional Conference at Indianapolis. Among our monthly parties one of our favorites was the pot-luck supper with a most entertaining play-review by one of our faculty members. To end this informative year, we had our tenth annual formal banquet and initiation at the hotel where 17 candidates were initiated in a most impressive candlelight ceremony. About sixty guests and parents witnessed the ritual and the program, *Sugar and Spice*, given by the members. Awards and dramatic certificates were received by outstanding members; Best Thespian was Beverly Weaver while a special bronze award was given to Carolyn Eyer, a senior, who had earned 161 points during her three years in the society.—*Julia Moores, Secretary.*

BELLEFONTAINE, OHIO

Troupe 100

Troupe 100 had another successful dramatic season this past year. Our first major production was the junior class play, *Father of the Bride*. In addition to our usual Christmas Play, which was *The Scarlet Ribbon*, the Thespians presented a one-act play entitled *Sorry, Wrong Number* before the student body. This was the original radio version.

Our second major production was *The Curious Savage*. Applause should go to the performers who revealed the philosophy and dramatic content of the scenes. Hats off to the senior dramatists, who did a superb job with *The Dark House*. It was an intriguing mystery interspersed with scenes of comedy and romance.



The Little Dog Laughed, Troupe 496, Mishawaka, Ind., High School,
Emily K. Davidson, Sponsor.

AUBURN, WASHINGTON

Troupe 626

As a starter of activities Troupe 626 took a trip to the College of Puget Sound and saw *Goodbye My Fancy*. Watching other actors and actresses at work inspired members of our own group to put on the senior class play, *Jenny Kissed Me*. In April the all-school play, *Blithe Spirit*, was presented. A cutting from *Blithe Spirit* was taken to the regional conference at South Kitsap. With the help of plays and other activities, points were earned by eight persons, who were initiated into the group on May 3. On Class Night our present president, Jeanette Cooper, was awarded the Best Thespian cup. Old members and new initiates consider this to have been a successful and enjoyable season and are looking forward to next Fall's activities.—*Judy Sarver, Reporter.*

In our yearly Thespian Ceremony thirty new members were inducted into the society. We are proud to say that seven members received honor bars, the highest number ever presented to our troupe. At the conclusion of our assembly our sponsor presented "oscar" to the best actor and actress, best supporting actor and actress.

We also went to Kenton, Ohio, to see the play, *Time Out for Ginger* and to Ohio Northern to observe the play, *Ten Little Indians*.—*Ann Patrick, Reporter.*

WATSONVILLE, CALIF.

Troupe 863

We thought it might be of interest to fellow troupes to let them know what our troupe decided to do in matters of awards. We hope it may stimulate an interest in exchanging ideas

through *Thespian Chatter*. We voted to place a permanent plaque in the main hall on which is inscribed the names of our Best Thespians. We unanimously agreed to award a small trophy to each Best Thespian.

Because most of us were fully appreciative of the contributions of our music department, we elected to give a nominal amount of our production profit to that department to show our appreciation.

Finally, we established a \$25. annual fund to purchase recordings relating to drama for our school library; this collection will consist of play excerpts, dramatic readings, poetry, and top musical hits.—*Evelyn Tyler, Secretary.*

PETALUMA, CALIFORNIA

Troupe 977

The Petaluma Troupe 977 opened the 1954-55 season with a three-act play, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. On February 2 twenty-five new members were initiated into the Thespian Society at a banquet held in their honor. All drama club students, who were interested, attended the Northwest Drama Conference at Santa Rosa Junior College. During the day there were sectional meetings on all phases of drama work. The students were fortunate to attend *The Crucible*, *Misalliance*, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, and *Death of a Salesman*. The annual senior play presented this year was *The Curious Savage*. It was a dramatic hit as well as a financial success. During the year the drama club sponsored several assemblies. These programs stimulated dramatic interest in the new sophomores and helped advertise plays. The outstanding program was held on Round-Up Day. One of our Thespians did an excellent job of acting as the M. C. Our last project of the year was another banquet initiating new members. The total membership of our troupe was 36.—*Diane Ferrin, Reporter.*

LIBERTY, INDIANA

Troupe 1088

The Talking Twenty Dramatics Club was very proud of its new member. Jasper, the teddy bear, made quite a hit when he appeared in *The Curious Savage*, a three-act comedy presented in March. Jasper thought our club's annual trip to Cincinnati in April was quite an experience. The other members of the club also enjoyed seeing the musical comedy, *Pajama Game*.

Home for Christmas, the club's Christmas play, had all the makings of the festive season—Christmas tree, carols, and the traditional family gathering. At our banquet an award was presented to our Best Thespian, and the best actor or actress of the year in the entire high school was announced. The club members chose this person by ballot.

All in all, this was a very successful year for the Talking Twenty Dramatics Club, even though our group was snowed out of attending the Second Indiana Regional Conference.—*Janice Lafuze, Reporter.*

WELLSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA

Troupe 372

We Thespians presented the following: *Ladies of the Mop*, *Nobody Sleeps*, *A Song of Glory*, and *The Living Constitution*. In March we sponsored the senior play, *Nine Girls*. We held two initiation ceremonies and added fourteen members to our membership. Thespians entertained the Woman's Club with the one-act plays, *Pin-up Pals* and *Dear Aunt Matilda*. Members attended West Liberty College to see *Macbeth* and *See How They Run*. We also visited the Wheeling television studio. This year's activities ended in May with the induction of new officers at our annual social gathering.—*Marjorie Orr, President.*

HOUSTON, TEXAS

Troupe 153

The school year 1954-55 was a big one for Thespians at Mirabeau B. Lamar High School, Houston, Texas. Productions included a three-act comedy, an adaptation of a Broadway musical, and a one-act play which won the state contest.

Mrs. Ruth R. Denney, Lamar's drama director, opened the season with Joseph Kesselring's *Arsenic and Old Lace*, which played two nights to capacity crowds in Lamar's 1400-seat auditorium. This big show was followed in the spring by Lamar's own adaptation of Irving Berlin's *Annie, Get Your Gun*, which was titled simply *Annie*. The choruses were directed by Mrs. Virginia Stecher; elaborate dance routines were featured; and fabulous scenery was created by the art department. The 25-piece Lamar orchestra played original arrangements of the songs of the play. The songs, along with a lively narration, were later recorded for the student body on 33 1/3 r.p.m. long-play records. Over 300 of these recordings were sold.

The one-act play contest, held in Texas during April and May, is sponsored by the University Interscholastic League, an extension division of the University of Texas. After careful screening, Mrs. Denney selected for Lamar's entry Act II of *Our Town*, Thornton Wilder's classic of naturalness and simplicity. Weeks of rehearsal paid off when *Our Town* was awarded first place in the city (district), regional, and state contests. The state finals, in which eight plays from all over Texas were entered, were judged by Professor Mouzon Law of the University of Texas drama staff. In addition, Joanne Sweet won the Samuel French award for the best performance in the state of Texas, and Bob Crutchfield, who played the role of the stage manager, was one of three named to the all-star cast.

Already at Lamar Mrs. Denney is busily planning a new season of musicals, one-acts, even a little Shakespeare, and possibly a chance at another state crown.—Reporter.

MONROE, MICHIGAN

Troupe 774

Enthusiastic and well deserved applause met the final curtain of all three performances of *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*, presented by our troupe. The play was a real success for Mr. Lemburg, director, and all those who assisted him, and will long be remembered as one of the outstanding comedies presented by Troupe 774.—Nancy Roeder, Secretary.

WAYNE, MICHIGAN

Troupe 670

The year 1954-55 was an interesting as well as a successful one for Troupe 670. It got off to a good start with the junior play, *Clementine*, in November. Several Thespians were in the cast; others worked on the various crews. Next came the Children's Theatre production, which is our very own "baby." We did *Little Red Riding Hood* with six performances in various grade schools. The kiddies loved it, but no more than the cast. Then the dramatics club presented *Papa Is All*,



January Thaw, Troupe 168, Logan, W. Va., High School, Thelma Juergensmeyer, Sponsor.

and many students realized their ambition to become Thespians by their work in this production. Lastly, came the senior play, *Blithe Spirit*. What fun to do a really sophisticated play! Next year we hope to do some Shakespeare, so be looking for our report. Last year we worked, we learned, we played, but we profited as well.—Reporter.

LUDINGTON, MICHIGAN

Troupe 1158

Troupe 1158 had a good year. The troupe increased in membership, jumping from two in September, to a total of nineteen. All members passed a test required for membership.

The production of three three-act plays (*Our Town*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, and *The Curious Savage*) and four one-act plays (*A Question of Figures*, *Let's Make Up*, *Light from the Lamp*, and *Xingu*) kept us busy. Last year we began producing all plays, except the senior play, under the Thespian name.

During the formal initiation, given as an assembly in April, "Oscars" were presented as follows: Best Thespian, Harry Purdy; Best Actor, John Garcia; Best Actress, Marilyn Gibson; Best Supporting Actor, Maurice Bailey; and Best Supporting Actress, Judy Wehrle. These awards were decided by members of the

troupe and selected members of the faculty.—Marilyn Gibson, Secretary.

MOBILE, ALABAMA

Troupe 852

In order to captivate the interest of all students, we offered skits, one-act plays, and a full length drama. We further tried to stimulate interest by having several morning hikes. Probably the most novel activity of all was our "Family Night" program at which time all students of the school were asked to bring members of their family and enjoy, as a family group, the Thespians' production, *The Patchwork Quilt*. The plan was very successful, and the play was great! A melodrama (for students like to relive the days of the "nineties"), *He Aint Done Right by Nell*, was declared the top presentation of the year—for one-act plays.—Lillian A. Walker, Reporter.

GLEN BURNIE, MARYLAND

Troupe 1288

Troupe 1288 held its formal induction ceremony with the candidates wearing white gowns and the officers, black. Both groups had a light blue sash from shoulder to hipline bearing the words, "National Thespians." Marching in to the music of *The Priest's March*, the students took their seats on risers backgrounded with palms. Overhead was the large standard in blue and gold bearing the glittering words, "National Thespians."

Twenty-four students took the pledge, which was administered by our principal, Charles W. Whayland. Five of these became Honor Thespians and three became Best Thespians.

Following the ceremony a skit was presented, but the highlight of the entertainment was the appearance of a former Thespian who already achieved great laurels in the field of dramatics. Judy Werle of the class of '53 has been studying with Miss Rosa Ponselle (Metropolitan Opera fame), and Judy honored everyone by graciously singing several songs. Already Judy appeared with the Baltimore Civic Opera, and has high hopes for the Met sometime in the near future.—Helen Hyle, Secretary.

WOOD RIVER, ILLINOIS

Troupe 733

Because of hard work on the part of our director and Thespian Troupe, the dramatic department has earned a place of importance at our high school and in the community. All this has been accomplished by our work being directed toward the presentation of worthwhile and appealing plays.



Making-up for *Arsenic and Old Lace* are Marie Kasperick and Betty Flaherty, Troupe 1275, Cathedral High School, Helena, Montana, Sister Mary Dolorita, Sponsor.



Pink and Patches, Troup 1246, Conway, So. Car., High School, Florence Epps, Sponsor.

To start the ball rolling, we presented *Stage Door* as our fall production. That was followed by an inspiring Christmas pageant and a musical adaptation of Moliere's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. As a climax to our thus far successful year, we presented *Death Takes a Holiday*, an extremely sensitive play that utterly captivated the audience. Now we are making plans to make this next year as interesting and even more successful than the last.—*Janet Lea Brazier, President.*

ASHLEY, OHIO

Troupe 1188

Our Elm Valley Troupe began its 1954-55 year with an all-school dance, the "Harvest Moon Ball." Our new sponsor, Carol Boyles,

directed our senior play, *Tattletale*, in November. Later in the fall we held our candle light ceremony in which nine new members were initiated. Christmas time came around and we got in the festivities of the season by sponsoring a dance called "Santa's Sock Hop." In March the troupe sponsored three one-act plays: *One Special for Doc*, *Couldn't I Kiss You Goodnight?*, and *Mooncalf Mugford*; the last was entered in the county one-act play contest. The junior class presented a western, *Desperate Ambrose*, in April. Troupe members attended the Thespian conferences in Fremont and Delaware. The year was brought to a close with an initiation of fifteen new members at our formal banquet. Speaking for all members of Troupe 1188, we feel this has been a very successful year.—*Reporter.*

MANISTEE, MICHIGAN

Troupe 73

During the past year Troupe 73 provided entertainment for the school and community and created new interests for the students of the high school. For the first time in two years the dramatic group presented a public play, *A Date with Judy*. This was so enthusiastically received that an unscheduled repeat performance was put on, literally by popular request. Our depleted treasury was replenished beyond all expectation.

As has been customary, a series of one-act plays was presented for the student body in assembly and also for various groups in the community. Highlighted this year was the well

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received production of the problem play, *The Actor*. This was given for the bi-annual "Parents Night" in co-operation with the school's Guidance Department to create better public relations among parents, teachers, students, and of course the Dramatics Department.

For the first time the formal initiation of members was presented as a school assembly program; eight cups were awarded for outstanding performances in both major and minor play divisions. These awards definitely created student interest in the previously obscure Dramatics Department, and the ovations received by initiates and active Thespians alike were ample reward for their work during the year.—*Gloria Peiker, Secretary.*

ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

Troupe 570

We were unusually active during last season, with emphasis placed on student produced programs and plays which "toured" other schools in the area. Anne Wright and Gretchen Lemon "co-produced" a fall play, *Remember Your Diaphragm*, which was presented at Andrew Lewis High. By invitation they performed at Woodrow Wilson Junior High in May. The State Festival winning one-act play, *Pipes of Dunbar*, was presented before the City Teachers Association on March 29. Incidentally, Fleming Thespians won the highest award in the State Play Festival for thirteen years. We produced *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay* last fall, *The Christmas Carol* in December, and *Two Gentlemen and Verona* in May. We

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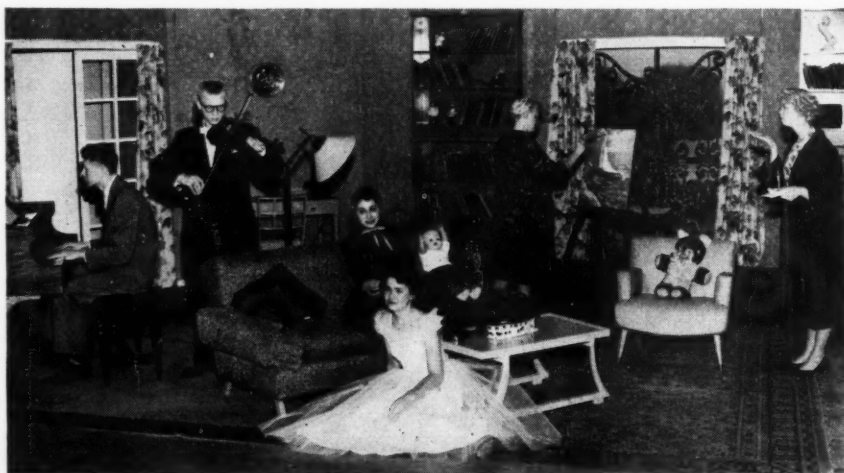
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The Curious Savage, Troupe 352, Robbinsdale, Minn., Sr. High School, Bess V. Sinnott, Sponsor.

did two television shows and five radio shows. We have been busy!—Gretchen Lemon, Secretary.

MIDLAND, MICHIGAN

Troupe 902

The Midland High School Dramatics Club started the season with the play, *Lost Horizon*. The oriental costumes and setting made the play very outstanding. The combined efforts of the fourteen member cast and forty members of the production staff resulted in a great success. In February we attended the play, *Madwoman of Chaillot*, presented by the Little Theatre Guild of Midland. In March the local speech contests, sponsored by the Dramatics Club, were held. The winners of these contests went to the district contest where Midland took top honors, winning four of five firsts. Also in March we presented an evening of one-act plays: *Fantasy on an Empty Stage*, *Journey of Promise*, and *Thursdays at Home*. Our annual Thespian Banquet on May 9 featured the formal initiation of our new Thespians.—Barbara Pendell, Secretary.

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

Troupe 468

Another school year—another successful year for the dramatic arts department! After our fall show, *Gramercy Ghost*, which proved to be such an excellent choice, sixteen new members were admitted into our troupe. The one-act play program for grades 7, 8, and 9, which proved to be so successful the previous season, was again given. This consisted of one-act plays using pupils from these lower grades as actors and crew members, with Thespians acting as chairmen for crews, and a Thespian assisted with the directing of each play. Since the production night for these one-acts was so close to the All-City Play Festival, an annual event among the four public high schools in Cedar Rapids, one of the plays this year, *The Brink of Silence*, was presented with an all-Thespian cast. *Sparkin'* and *Ghost for Rent* rounded out the bill of one-acts.

Spring brought the ultimate of shows to our student body and patrons, for *Charley's Aunt*, that all-time favorite, was presented. Interesting sets were constructed (we used all three of them!), our new blue sky cyclorama was initiated, and we played to two full houses.

But the final curtain on *Charley's Aunt* was not the finale for the program. Something new had been added to Franklin players and crew members. After that final curtain actors and crew members joined in a *strike party*. Yes, the efforts of actors, stage hands, crew members were combined; and the entire set was struck, all was put away, and when all was ship-shape again (about an hour of combined efforts did the trick), director, actors, stage crews joined in good food, a bit of reminiscing about the play, a bit of looking forward to the next production and another strike party. The group loved the party—and it is the way the actors can say "thank you" for a job well done to stage crew members.—Joseph Nassif, President.

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Stage: Arranged with flowers and large Thespian insignia of Comedy and Tragedy, painted with glowing silver.

Wardrobe: Happy faces, encircling a beautiful trophy and certificate of merit from the National Thespian Society. Two students wear "all state cast" look.

Story: Miss Florence Hill of Lehman High School presided over the simple but impressive ceremony. Troupe 1524 members know they reached a high goal by attaining membership in the National Thespian Society and thank all those who were so wonderful in helping them. They hope always to uphold the motto "Act well your part; there all the honor lies."—Ann Williams, Scribe.

WHITTIER, CALIFORNIA

Troupe 1425

On the evening of June 2, 1955, Thespian Troupe 1425 of California High School held its first Annual Awards Banquet. After dinner Patsy Humiston, president, initiated ten new members into the troupe. Scenes were given in competition for the awards of best actress, best actor, and best scene. Richard Reinjohn was chosen best actor, and Kathy Fornas, best actress. Installation of officers followed the scenes with Roger Hendricsen installed as president. Awards were then presented with Patsy Humiston and Roger Hendricsen announced as Best Thespians of the year.—Liz Taylor, Secretary.

BRADLEY, ILLINOIS

Troupe 223

With 18 new understudies inducted into Troupe membership, with the production of *Show Boat Days Review*, and with participation of some Thespians and understudies in the two class plays of the year, our Thespian troupe had a busy year. In addition to this, all of our speech contestants in the Illinois State Speech Contest this year were Thespians or understudies. We tied for first place in the district contest and won second in the sectional contest. The president of our troupe, Marilyn Hawkins, advanced to the state contest in two events. Our contest one-act play was *Happy Journey* by Thornton Wilder, and with it we tied for second place in our District. The two major plays of the year were *Father of the Bride*, the senior class play in November, and *Black Magic*, the junior class play presented in April. The lead characters in the senior play were double-cast.—Jackie Kerr, Reporter.

CINCINNATI, OHIO

Troupe 1093

Troupe 1093 at Colerain High School was very busy during the year 1954-55. The first production of the year was *Junior Miss* under the direction of Mary Berry, dramatics teacher and troupe sponsor. The group then gave a very unique Christmas program entitled *Prince of Peace*. It was a choral reading and something new at Colerain. Several members of Troupe 1093 participated in two TV programs on WCET, the educational channel in Cincinnati.

The big spring play given this year was *Harriet*. For the first time at Colerain the cast included members representing the entire student body instead of only the usual members of the senior dramatics class. A new club was organized in connection with Thespians. It is the C.P.S. (stage crew) club, and a record of all the members' work is kept so that membership into Thespians may be granted when earned.—Janice Mattfeld, Secretary.

THEATRE FOR CHILDREN

(Continued from page 13)

"For some time our drama director and Thespian sponsor, Mrs. Learn, has been trying to sell the idea of doing Children's Theatre for Troupe 1100. Last spring we saw the light, and this fall presented *The Sleeping Beauty of Loreland*. We believe that we couldn't have made a better selection for our initial production in this medium . . . The results were overwhelming! We played to **standing room only** both nights! The play was fun to do from the first rehearsal to the final curtain, and both adults and children in the audiences were entranced.

"The play follows the traditional story closely, with some delightful additions. At Beauty's christening party, the Rainbow Fairies present the baby princess with gifts, but the Black Fairy, amid thunder crashes, gives her the curse of death, which is amended by the Sunlight Fairy to 100 years' sleep. The fairy sequence was colorful and wonderful, and we believe that we enhanced the beauty of this scene by using 'out of this world' theramin music recordings offstage . . . On Beauty's wedding day, fifteen years later, the curse is carried out, and Beauty and all the Court fall asleep. This scene and the awakening one, after Prince Charming's famous kiss 100 years later, is a wonderful challenge to good pantomimic work . . . Humor is abundant in this play, with some subtle lines to satisfy adult members of the audience. There are really grand characterizations in Bumps, the butler, jolly King Tuffy, and the goose-stepping cooks. The cooks we used were a six-foot-two 'string bean' and a five-by-five 'dumpling.' Just looking at them was laugh-provoking . . . The sets were extremely simple, as they should be, and we went 'all out' on costumes . . . Our good box office receipts may have been partly due to an advertising scheme we promoted, whereby certain members of the cast donned their costumes and appeared at the neighboring elementary school, and keeping in character, talked to the youngsters about the play . . . We urge other schools to join the group of Thespian Children's Theatre producers, for we feel sure that they will succeed and gain great satisfaction in this enchanting form of entertainment."

The enthusiasm of these Thespian sponsors and members for Children's Theatre speaks for itself. Their reports need no editorial comment except to say that they all bespeak and imply excellent training and a reaching for the high Thespian ideals, evident in the enthusiasm with which they are contributing fine service to the children of the community while they are learning the elements of good play production. Let us hear from more of you!!!

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SPECIFIC BUSINESS

(Continued from page 11)

unately would not interfere with the dialogue or the purpose of the scene. Therefore he picked up the newspaper from the table up left and started to move toward a chair down center only to discover that he did not have his glasses. In searching for the glasses, he moved over to the fireplace and then over to the bookcase where he found them.

In this instance, while the director was not responsible for the specific business, he had established the action pattern of the scene and at the same time he had permitted the actor to use his own initiative in developing the specific business. Although one cannot expect the unskilled actor to develop specific business in all cases, the example may serve to suggest to directors a method of introducing specific business by utilizing a stage property to stimulate the actor in developing specific motivation for his stage movement. The experienced actor will appreciate this demonstration of the director's faith in him to develop his own specific business, and at the same time the inexperienced actor may be encouraged to develop a freedom of movement as a result of this device.

Specific business is usually dependent on the use of set or personal hand prop-

erties. The director should insist on their use as early in the rehearsal schedule as possible. Sometimes, by stressing the importance of the use of properties, the actor may be encouraged to memorize lines quickly so that he will be free to make use of these properties. Also, even in the rehearsal room the director should insist on furniture and set furnishings closely approximating the furniture to be used on the stage. The actor should be asked to visualize the setting in terms of doors, windows, walls, pictures, and other set properties. Such visualization will enable him to be constantly aware of the possibilities of specific stage business.

Sometimes through his observation of his cast off stage, the director may note individual mannerisms or actions that may be employed in the play. I recall an actor who was very careful about his appearance and repeatedly took out a pocket comb, removed it carefully from the case, combed his hair, and then with similar care replaced the comb in its holder and returned it to his pocket. Later, when the same boy was playing Frank Lippincott in *My Sister Eileen*, I had him perform the same bit of business to cover what might have been an awkward pause while waiting on stage for Eileen to appear. In this instance, the pause was adequately covered, the actor utilized specific business which

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was uniquely his own, and another laugh was added to the many already implicit in this delightful farce.

Too often the director tries to solve the problem of specific business by limiting himself to the playwright's stage directions found in the printed acting version of the play. If a play is to have the director's "signature," however, the printed directions in most instances should serve only as a point of departure for the director. The director of the non-professional production is not working with the same cast that the professional director used. The action of this latter group, which usually serves as the source for the printed directions for stage business, is not always applicable. By utilizing his own creative imagination and by closely observing his own cast, the director can give the play its own individual personality through his personalized direction.

In addition to the specific business introduced by the director in cooperation with his cast, the over-all picturization also enables the director to personalize his play.

Picturization can pervade the entire structure of the play including the setting. The Russian comedy, Gogol's *The Inspector General*, is a satire on the pettiness of a group of local municipal officials, who through their keyhole peeking and gossip carry on their policy of graft and corruption. The Russian director, Meyerhold, initiated the concept of an experimental setting composed primarily of doors, and his idea has been adopted with some variations by many non-professional directors including the author. As may be seen in the illustration, three doors were placed on levels parallel with the footlights on stage left and right. On each door a symbol was painted identifying the door with one of the officials, i.e., the doctor, the professor, the postmaster, the police chief, etc. Each official made his entrances and exits through his respective door. Furthermore, since each door was supported only by stage braces, the actor could look over the top of the door or around the side. Then too he could open the door and overhear all that was happening in the mayor's house, which was established in the down center stage area. Another production of his same play utilized a series of large keyhole shaped doors, which served the same purpose of picturing for the audience the basic idea of the comedy. In this manner the director was able to keep clearly before the audience the theme of the play. This setting also served to suggest many types of specific business, and thus the picturization and the specific business were completely integrated by the director.

A more commonly recognized type of picturization may be noted in the illustration depicting the action in Synge's Irish comedy, *The Playboy of the Western World*. The attention of the audi-

ence is called to the leading character through the use of levels. At the same time, while it is obvious from the illustration that Christy, the young man on the bench, is in conflict with the other characters in the scene, the one person who is attracted to him, Pegeen, the girl, stands closest to him. In this instance, the director has pictured the basic conflict in the scene and the relationship of the various characters so that even though the dialogue is omitted, the basic mood and concept is presented to the audience.

Through the elements of specific business and picturization, the play director may feel that he can personally "sign" the play—limited only by his own resourcefulness and creative imagination.

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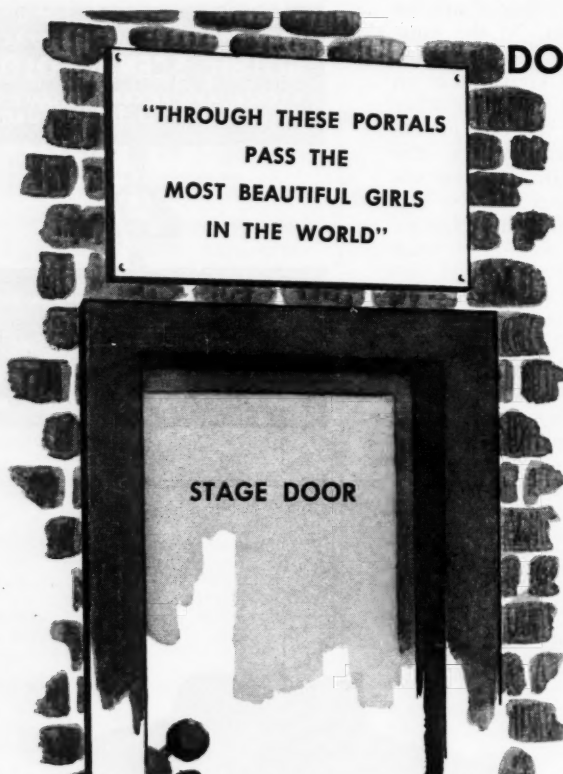
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COSTUMES

(Continued from page 10)

The court dress of noblemen in 1735 was a coat made of colored velvet or fine cloth laced with gold or silver; breeches to match the coat; and a waistcoat of rich flowered silk of a large pattern on a white ground.

A beau of this period appeared in a different style of wig every day, and hats could be molded in so many different cocks as to change the whole appearance of the wearer.

Boots were worn for riding, with large broad tops that reached halfway up the thigh. About 1750 mufftees, or little woolen muffs of various colors, were used by men in the colonies.

In the summer season men often wore calico morning gowns at all times of the day in the street as well as at home. A damask banyan was much the same thing by another name.

In the time of the Revolutionary War many American officers introduced the use of Dutch blankets for great coats. Large silver buttons worn on coats and vests were a mark of wealth. Some had the initials of their names engraved on each button. Some buttons were made out of real quarter dollars, with the coinage impression still retained. These were used for the coats, and the eleven-penny-bits for vests and breeches.

Early in the 18th century the streets of New York were filled with gay masculine costumes of green silk breeches, flowered with silver and gold, silver gauze breeches, yellow fringed gloves,

lacquered hats, laced shirts and neckcloths.

In Massachusetts from 1760 to 1770 gentlemen wore hats with broad brims turned up into three corners with loops at the sides; long coats with large pocket-folds and cuffs, and without collars. The buttons were commonly plated, but were sometimes of silver, often as large as a half dollar. Shirts had bosom and wrist ruffles; and all wore gold or silver shirt buttons at the wrist united by a link. The waistcoat was long, with large pockets; and the neckcloth or scarf was of fine white linen or figured stuff brodered with the ends hanging loosely on the breast. The breeches fitted close with silver buckles at the knees. The legs were covered with gray knitted stockings, which on holidays were exchanged for black or white silk. Boots with broad white tops, or shoes with straps and large silver buckles, completed the attire.

The costume of the ordinary classes during the greater part of the 18th century was exceedingly simple, consisting of a plain coat, buttoned up in front, a long waistcoat reaching to the knees, but having capacious pockets with great over-lapping flaps, a plain bobwig, a hat slightly turned up, and high quartered shoes.

After the Revolutionary War at his second inauguration in Philadelphia in 1793, Washington's costume was a full suit of black velvet, diamond knee buckles and a light sword with gray scabbard, his hair powdered and in a bag. Jefferson was dressed in a blue coat,

small clothes, and a vest of crimson. Adams was clad in a full suit of fine gray cloth.

The short-waisted coats and high collars, which marked the end of the 18th century, were specially noticeable in military and naval uniforms.

When the Revolutionary War ended, one regular regiment of infantry and two companies of the corps artillery were retained in service. The uniform of the infantry was dark blue, with white facings, white linings, black cocked hats, white hat bindings, white worsted shoulder knots, white buttons, silver epaulettes for officers, white cross belts, black stocks, white underdress, black gaiters, and black plume. The artillery uniform was dark blue faced with scarlet, scarlet linings; yellow buttons, yellow binding for black felt cocked hat, and yellow edging buttonholes; white underdress, gold epaulettes for officers; and yellow worsted shoulder knots for noncommissioned officers and buff belts, white cravats and black plume, with red top.

Costumes of the 18th Century were indeed colorful, elaborate, ornamented and fastidious. Yet here indeed is one century in which the costumes showed the contrast of the rich and the poor. The rich, greedy for power and wealth, and the poor, poorer than church mice, were the forerunners of a need for a new social system, climaxed by the French Revolution. Dress of any age can easily be the prophet of "things to come."

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THEATRE TODAY

(Continued from page 9)

cus for a whole generation of leading American playwrights. George Pierce Baker (1866-1935) was probably the greatest teacher of dramaturgy in America; he numbered among his students Phillip Barry, Sidney Howard, S. N. Behrman, George Abbott, Eugene O'Neill, and many others. The influence of few men can be traced as directly and profoundly as that of G. P. Baker. We will have room here to only glance at the works of a few of his disciples.

Phillip Barry (1896-) was one of the most promising of the students. *Paris Bound* (1927) and *Holiday* (1928) are early fulfillments of that promise in the genre of witty and sophisticated comedy. *The Animal Kingdom* (1932) is somewhat weaker, but *The Philadelphia Story* (1939) is a light, touching piece of comic froth depicting the American society of manners. In later life Barry turned to a searching out in his dramas for the elusive "Truth"; this serious turn of reference did not result in dramas of great note.

Marc Connelly (1890-) cannot be overlooked either. A frequent collaborator with other writers, his successes with Kaufman include the hilarious excursion into American expressionism in the form of a satire of big business, *Beggar on Horseback* (1924), and their lampooning of the motion picture industry, *Merton of the Movies* (1922). But it is his great adaptation of negro folklore, *The Green Pastures* (1930), which is his masterpiece. A naive, colorful, dramatic retelling of the Bible, it may well be one of the very few important American dramas of the twentieth century. Like Connelly, and his frequent co-writer, George S. Kaufman (1889-) is best known for his satires. *The Royal Family* (1927), a satire on the Barrymore acting family; *Stage Door* (1936), a sentimental comedy dealing with hopeful acting aspirants; *Of Thee I Sing* (1931), a burlesque of national politicking; and *Once in a Lifetime* (1930), a hysterical comedy about Hollywood, are but a few of his many collaborations. Best-loved of all of course is the very familiar *You Can't Take It with You* (1936), which he wrote with Moss Hart, and more serious, also with Hart, is *The American Way* (1939). Kaufman, whether as director or as writer, is a man who knows what his audiences want, and he has successfully and ingeniously given it to them over the years.

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BISHOP AND THE CONVICT. Pauline Phelps. Play founded on an incident in "Les Miserables" by Victor Hugo. 3 m. 2 f. Int. 25 min. The story is the familiar one of Jean Valjean stealing the Bishop's candlesticks. A contest winner. 60c

BOOK, THE. Beatrice LaForce. 3 f. Int. 30 min. Romantic drama. In her youth, Aunt Laura had received a book of poems from her lover when she was expecting a proposal. She put the book, unopened, in the book-case and allowed no one to touch it. Years after, she opened the book and found the proposal inside. A dramatic, well written play. 60c

DEAR LADY, BE BRAVE. Comedy by Lovel L. Shelton. 3 m. 3 f. 25 min. Scene: a doctor's office. Dr. Clark, a young physician, devises a plan to help his friend Tandy decide which of three girls to marry. Parts all good. Fungus, the colored janitor, furnishes a large share of the laughs. 60c

HER GIRLISH HEART. Luella E. McMahon. 1955 Melodramatic comedy. 4 m. 1 f., or may be done by an all female or all male cast. 15 min. Great fun for casts and audiences. Because of the quick action of the faithful English servant and Oscar, Betty's lover, the wicked villain is foiled. The action, including a thinking circle—semi-Conga effect—adds to the comedy. 60c

HERBIE'S FIRST DATE and other "Herbie" plays are all good contest plays with teen age characters. Each title, 60c

LITTLE OSCAR. Albert Van Antwerp. Comedy. 2 m. 2 f. and two baby buggies. Int. 25 min. A successful contest play. Henry and Josie are just ready to take the baby and go for a picnic when a boastful young couple arrive with their baby. The way ingenious Henry gets rid of them, brings roars of laughter from the audience. 60c

LOST WORD, THE. Drama. Henry Van Dyke's impressive story dramatized by Pauline Phelps. 4 m. 1 f. and a little boy (may be taken by a girl or small woman), and a reader and announcer (which may be doubled). 30 min. Depicts the unhappiness and sorrow that the loss of *The Word* meant to Herma and his young wife and the joy that comes when the memory of *The Word* is restored to him. 60c

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NOTHING TO DESTROY. Cora Montgomery. Drama. 5 f. (2 m., police officers, are optional characters). 20 min. The author has successfully used this play in the Mission Theatre in San Gabriel, Calif. The scene is a communist den where five women are gloating over their success in blowing up a chemical plant with the resultant death of many people. A great, patriotic drama in which the girl gives her life for the flag. Right for first performance goes with the purchase of 5 copies. Repeat performances, \$2.50. 60c

TELL TALE HEART. Pauline Phelps. 4 m. 30 min. A true dramatization of Poe's story. A play that is in demand for contests and wherever tense drama is desired.

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YOUNG STARS

(Continued from page 7)

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I asked Miss Paige if she had any specific suggestions for high school people, and she said some amazing things. "Too many young people want to pattern themselves after someone, their ideal, but they aren't objective enough to know that somebody else's personality couldn't possibly fit them. They must discover and develop their true selves. They should also learn to sing and dance as well as act. Every so-called 'method' of acting has its uses, and the student should not limit himself to only one. The voice should be pleasant and free of faults. The young actor must have three things: spark, believability and honesty."

Both Janis Paige and Viveca Lindfors emphasized the sacrifice, training and personal dedication required for theatre success. Both have an excess of talent and beauty that would be enough for success in any other profession, but the theatre keeps only the best.

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BRIEF VIEWS

By WILLARD FRIEDERICH



The following books are of two kinds: anthologies of plays, either by the same author or various writers, or individual plays. Most of them are not of the variety that may be produced by the average high-school group; but all of them are part of the history of the world's drama and should be welcomed additions to the drama sections of school libraries.

WORLD DRAMA, 2 Vols., edited by Barrett H. Clark. Dover Publications, 1933, 663 pp. and 685 pp.

Since his death in 1953, Clark's well-known anthologies have been re-issued, and they still are just about what the **SATURDAY REVIEW** called them: "the most comprehensive collection of important plays from all literature available in English." Their only competition is the more recent John Gassner's *Treasury of the Theatre* collection; but in price they have no competition at all because these new editions, in the paper covers, are surprisingly inexpensive. They also come in the more expensive board-cover editions.

The first volume contains twenty plays from Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Denmark, Russia, and Norway, ranging in time from the Italian works of the early sixteenth century to Ibsen's *A Doll's House* in 1879. All of the well-known writers of these countries are represented, as well as a few of the not-so-famous ones. The translations of course are all fairly old, though standard, ones. Inclusion of some of the more recent translations would make this collection just about perfect, but one can't expect everything.

The second volume includes twenty-six plays from Greece, Rome, India, China, Japan, medieval Europe, and England, covering the centuries between Aeschylus and Sheridan's *School for Scandal* in 1777. Many of these plays, such as the anonymous medieval *Adam* and a typical farce of Hans Sachs, can be found in few other places. These two volumes will cost less than any one volume with far fewer plays in it.

NEW VOICES IN THE AMERICAN THEATRE. Modern Library, 1955, 559 pp.

Introduced by Brooks Atkinson, the six plays in this collection are presented as representative evidence of the maturing of the American theatre: *A Streetcar Named Desire*; *Death of a Salesman*; *Come Back, Little Sheba*; *The Seven Year Itch*; *Tea and Sympathy*; and *The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial*. The plays themselves are well enough known to require little comment; but it should be pointed out that even the most famous recent plays are not always found in anthologies and that, if one were to buy them in individual copies, the cost would not compare with the negligible cost of this book.

SOPHOCLES, edited by David Grene and Richmond Lattimore. University of Chicago Press, 1954, 206 pp.

EURIPIDES, edited by David Grene and Richmond Lattimore. University of Chicago Press, 1955, 221 pp.

Second in the series, *The Complete Greek Tragedies*, the Sophocles book presents recent translations of *Oedipus*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone*. The third volume in the series contains recent translations of Euripides' *Alcestis*, *Medea*, *The Heracleidae*, and *Hippolytus*. They are all excellent compromises be-

tween the regularized metrical form of classical poetry and the simple vernacular of modern conversation. They read—and should play—well.

THEATRE '55, edited by John Chapman. Random House, 1955, 474 pp.

This third volume of the "Golden Dozen" of plays considered by Chapman to be the best of Broadway's last season contains, as usual, a good many plays that would be at the top of anyone's list, such as *The Bad Seed*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Inherit the Wind*, *The Desperate Hours*, and so on. But once again one wonders about the merit of the season's output when such plays as *Lunatics and Lovers* and *Reclining Figure* must be included to round out the dozen. The book reports the season's total productions and casts, the obituaries of deceased theatre personnel, and the outstanding theatre publications.

SIX PLAYS BY RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN. Random House, 527 pp.

The six famous successes of the Rodgers-Hammerstein partnership in musical production, spanning more than a decade from 1942 to 1953, are *Oklahoma!*, *Carousel*, *Allegro*, *South Pacific*, *The King and I*, and *Me and Juliet*. These scripts require no evaluation for anyone interested in the theatre, and the book itself is a handsomely put-together volume. As far as this reviewer knows, this is the first anthology of the librettos of modern musical plays and thus is perhaps the best collected evidence to date of the direction our favorite form of theatre has taken in America.

FOUR PLAYS BY S. N. BERHMAN. Random House, 370 pp.

It would be interesting to know why the first anthology of Berhman's plays should contain only four plays (*The Second Man*, *Biography*, *Rain from Heaven*, and *End of Summer*) and why these particular four plays were selected. Though few will question the last three, perhaps many will wonder about the first choice. And surely everyone will wish that there were more of the scripts from the pen of the dramatist whom many critics consider the best American writer of witty, intellectual high comedy. This reviewer certainly mourns the exclusion of such plays as *Jacobowsky and the Colonel*, *Amphitryon*, and

No Time for Comedy. It is the better part of wisdom, however, to be thankful for what one has; and this collection will undoubtedly give an excellent introduction to the closest thing America has to the traditional British comedy of manners.

THE BURNING GLASS by Charles Morgan. Macmillan, 1953, 156 pp.

If some do not find this interesting as a play, they should at least find it provocative as a questioning of the atomic age. The author, both in his play and in a thoughtful preface, takes us through the phases of decision faced by a scientist who has discovered a new method of harnessing the sun's power so that it can burn any spot on earth to ashes. He soon abandons the scientist's instinctive first idea that a scientist only discovers and reports but leaves the decisions of how to use the discovery to the world at large. His next thought, to prohibit his discovery's uses in warfare and allow its uses only for peaceful pursuits, is also ultimately discarded in favor of the final decision: to prohibit its use in anything except a case of extreme military necessity to save the nation. His reason: man has grown abnormal in his desires and does not deserve the knowledge of a great power which he has not yet spiritually learned how to use.

INHERIT THE WIND by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee. Random House, 1955, 162 pp.

Inspired by the 1925 Scopes trial over the right to teach evolution in the state of Tennessee, this play is a challenging discussion of the rights of man to think and speak with freedom. The two leaders of that trial, Darrow and Bryan, are at least reflected in the protagonists of this drama, and the play's climax lies in the scene when they face each other as defense attorney and witness. Here is not only compelling drama, but thought as well.

THE DARK IS LIGHT ENOUGH by Christopher Fry. Oxford University Press, 1954, 103 pp.

So much has already been said about Fry's most recent original play that little can be added. It is undoubtedly true that the play is often verbose, cloudy in issues, and uncertain as drama; but it is also true that there are flashes of fine poetry, revealing characterization, and enlightening discussions of man's understanding of war and guilt. As one of the few modern examples of poetic drama, this play demands a place on any library shelf.

TIGER AT THE GATES by Jean Giraudoux, translated by Christopher Fry. Oxford University Press, 1955, 75 pp.

On the eve of the Trojan War Hector of Troy tries to persuade his people that war is evil; when the Greek Ulysses meets with him, he agrees; but the war is inevitable because the nature of man has made it so. A brilliant adaptation of a stimulating philosophical discussion of war and peace that has been put, more or less, into dramatic form, this play represents the modern theatre at its best.

PLAIN AND FANCY by Joseph Stein and Will Glickman. Random House, 1955, 176 pp.

Another musical comedy script, this one bases its theme on the contrast between city slickers and the isolated Amish sect of the Pennsylvania Dutch country. The dialect rings true and makes the book somewhat more interesting than many of the ordinary modern scripts.

THE BOY FRIEND by Sandy Wilson. Dutton, 1955, 126 pp.

The fabulously successful British musical comedy about the roaring twenties has been published with fascinating pen drawings that beautifully capture the mood of the era and the piece itself. The script alone is a rather frail thing, suggesting that the reason for its success was probably the physical production and the music rather than the words.

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